

# STATE SOCIALISM. By F. Nobili-Vitelleschi

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## STATE SOCIALISM.\*

If you should ask a man to hand you over his fortune, he would shoot you a furtive glance and ask himself if he ought not to secure you a certificate of insanity. Deal the same man a hand at cards, endow him with even a limited desire of gain, and he will let his fortune slide into your hands. It is in this peculiarity of the human soul that lies the danger of play.

If an orator in a public assembly demands the division of land or the confiscation of capital in the interest of labor, he is accused of subverting existing institutions, or, at any rate, of inciting class hatred. But let that same man, in his capacity of senator, or simple editor, propose two or three little laws which tend in the same direction, and he runs the risk of being elected President of the Council. It is in this peculiarity of the political world that lies the danger of that system of government and administration which is known as State Socialism.

But if this is true for the intelligent and cultivated classes, it is equally true that socialism pure and simple, socialism in its most explicit and absolute form, has a great attraction for the masses, by reason of that quality which it possesses, in common with the Gospels, of being addressed to the poor, the disinherited, the suffering, wherever found. And this it is which explains its great success, its rapid spread, the large number of its prose-

lytes. It is this factor which has lent to those who profess and propagate it the illusion of an apostolate, and has inspired in those who are its object an enthusiasm extending to fanaticism, to crime devoid of personal motive, to the scaffold itself.

But, over against and in contradiction to the resemblance noted above, lies a difference decisive in its results, namely, that the Gospels promise comfort and consolation in another world, while socialism promises them in this. In another world the possibilities of compensation and consolation for the injustices or the suffering of this are infinite, and, therefore, always greater than the need, however great this may be. But in this poor world of ours, means and resources are distinctly limited. From this difference it results that while the Gospel could proclaim as a beatitude the precise fact of being poor and unfortunate, socialism, on the contrary, finds its honor pledged to make prominent and heighten its suffering. Here is the source of the tranquillizing and restraining action of the first and the menace and danger which the second contains, and hence springs the terror which the latter inspires in those who busy their thoughts and their lives with public affairs or with their own personal quiet and security, for it is a cause, and not a remote one, of rebellion and of disorder.

The fact is, that before committing

\* Translated for The Living Age.

ourselves to promises of securing comfort and consolation for all the disinherited, it would have been both logical and prudent to make sure that society—that the earth itself, could redeem our pledge.

If this calculation had been made,—and there are statistics which enable us to do so, at least, approximately:—that is to say, if we set down in figures the wealth of the globe, or, as would be rather easier, the wealth of a single state, and then proceed to make an equal division of it among the number of its inhabitants, the result would probably be that the sum due each individual would be found not to exceed half the average yearly wage now paid. Moreover, when the division was finished, a large part of the wealth would have disappeared, since the organizations and economic forces which produce it would have been destroyed. No more is needed to prove that it is no such easy matter to keep these promises, as certain precursors of the future seem to imagine.

And, in truth, if a similar investigation were to be made from the earliest beginnings of this world through all its economic history, it would be seen that the variation of wages, in all epochs, and under the infinite combinations of financial and political rule in the various countries, has been barely perceptible, if we consider the question from the point of view of the workman's budget—if we compute the amount spent or consumed by a Greek or Roman laborer, or by an artisan or peasant during the Middle Ages or the Renaissance, and if, over against this sum, we set down the amount consumed or earned by a laborer of to-day, taking into account the change in values of materials and money, we shall see that the oscillations and variations are relatively but slight, and certainly never reach a point where they materially affect the lot of that

great and important section of humanity.

The error consists in allowing it to be believed that the rich are the rule and the poor the exception. The truth is, that given the earth's power of production and the amount of consumption by its inhabitants, the rule are those who are called poor in comparison with the rich, while the rich are the exception, and this not merely practically and as a fact, but constitutionally and of necessity, from the working of the inexorable law of supply and demand.

I said "those who are called poor in comparison with the rich," in order that it might be clear that I was speaking of those who have, each in accordance with his condition, enough to provide for the most simple and indispensable necessities of life—the really poor, those who are without even these modest resources, represent another phenomenon subject to its own laws. In every society whatever, provided it have a government, a debris collects, formed of the material and moral waste discarded in the struggle for life, part because of physical unsoundness, part because of moral obliquity, part because of circumstances impossible to predict or foresee. These persons constitute a sub-stratum of suffering which is not to be handled *a priori* either personally or politically. Wise handling can diminish these cases of suffering; it can neither hinder nor forestall them. They find their consolation in that benevolence and human charity which it is hard to direct officially. They constitute a world apart, for which society must make separate provision.

And, in truth, socialism does not busy itself with such as these; it is concerned with the artisan, the man with a small salary, with the man, in short, who, economically speaking, constitutes the middle, and therefore

represents the great majority, of society. Now, before promising to this man a change in fortune, the notion should have been perfectly clear and distinct how far society is capable of keeping such promises. The apostles of socialism have taken good care to avoid doing this. This is the first unknown quantity, and their failure to secure its exact value has been the great original sin of this school, already full-grown, though only just born.

Their second mistake lies in devoting all their thoughts to the distribution of wealth without giving the slightest heed to its production.

Before distributing anything it is necessary that the thing should exist and be put on the market—not in itself, but in so far as it has been made available will its distribution be in direct ratio to its production. If the production be abundant, the distribution will be generous; if the production be scanty, niggardly also the distribution.

And this the more because, by one of the fundamental laws, wealth regulates its own distribution.

From the point of view of ethics and the laws of comfort, the rich have a large range in the distribution of their property. And, ethically, they may be, and often are, very culpable. And the invectives which have been hurled at them by the moralists of all time have often had and still have often sufficient foundation. From the point of view of the circulation of money, however, each millionaire is spending and keeping in movement his own share. The fact is that those legendary misers, who bury their treasure, are exceptions which may be neglected in the great movement of the economic world. The rich man either spends or economizes—if he spends, he assists, as consumer, in the growth of industries; if he economizes, by using his savings he becomes himself an instru-

ment of production. Even when he spends less judiciously, the money, soon cleansed of its momentary defilement, passes on to foster labor under all its forms.

Wealth is, therefore, self-distributing, inevitably and in accordance with its own laws. By administrative and political artifices, such as have been practised in the past, and which some would fain make use of to-day, the circulation and distribution of wealth may be regulated, but no artifice can better or increase the wealth itself. The best régime, for the circulation and distribution of wealth is liberty—left free it reaches of its own impulse the degree of distribution of which it is capable. But whatever be the régime, whatever the form decided on for the distribution of wealth, in any case the fundamental law of supply holds good, the law, that is, which demands that the distribution of wealth should always be in proportion to its production.

The first element, therefore, to be taken into consideration, the first problem to be resolved by those who, whether through their economics, social studies, or through their sympathy with the lot of the poor and disinherited, are interested in the distribution of money, should be that of the reproduction of wealth. In this alone there lies the secret of increasing more or less perceptibly that general average of prosperity to which we have before alluded, and therefore of ameliorating the condition of the working classes within the necessary limitations and after the only possible fashion.

Now that the problem is stated, which is the better method of encouraging and fostering an increase in the production of wealth, collectivism and protection, that authorized intervention of law which the socialists invoke, or the spontaneous initiative of one

and all, and liberty under the system which by struggle and bloodshed the new world has won from the prejudices and bonds of the old?

The answer to this question was given long since by science and experience alike. Socialism, in truth, has only been able to come into prominence by discrediting all economic science, which it persists in regarding as hopelessly old fashioned. As for experience, that of the marvellous wealth produced and accumulated up to the present day under the old regime has been distinctly encouraging; the school of the future has yet to be tested.

According to the axioms of economics the factors of wealth are three,—human intelligence, not to say genius, capital and labor. And, in truth, if a man were to be left stranded on a land having the greatest potentiality of fertility, holding in its bosom the richest mines in the world, unless he had the initiative, the means and the power to turn these natural resources to account, he would die of want in the midst of all heaven's bounty. We may, therefore, state as a fact that, economically speaking, the only factors of wealth are brains, labor and capital. The question asked above may, therefore, be still further simplified and stated thus: Which of the two systems will be found most efficacious and prove best adapted to rouse the activity and call forth the resources of the human intelligence, to collect and accumulate capital, to discipline labor and render it productive?

The briefest consideration of these three factors of wealth will force us to admit that the human mind is stimulated and becomes effective in proportion to the results at which it aims, and the advantages which it proposes to derive from its efforts. The men who sacrifice themselves for glory or an idea are a negligible quantity.

The next necessity is that they should be able to pursue their aim. Capital is distrustful and suspicious, and to collect and accumulate needs to feel secure, not only on its own behalf, but also that its instruments be comfortable and remunerative. Labor is cautious and keen, and must be placed, as far as may be, out of the reach of the eventualities of trade. Intermittent and precarious labor is that least adapted to provide for the existence of the laborer. Hence, it follows that the larger all the promises of gain, and incidentally of glory, which are offered to genius, the greater security and fuller reward set before capital, the surer confidence and stability presented to labor, the greater will be the wealth produced. and therefore, distributed, which will lead to a general increase in comfort and diminution in poverty and suffering.

If, on the other hand, you restrict the human intelligence in its liberty of action and dock the reward due its efforts, if you thwart and persecute capital and arbitrarily limit its gains, and force labor into the chances of speculation, then the production of wealth will first diminish, and finally cease entirely. By fighting wealth, you produce poverty. By destroying the rich you create the poor.

Many arguments are not needed to prove that that collectivism which forms the basis of socialism, is the negation of individual initiative. When all have a right to intervene, no one can work independently and freely. Neither genius nor talent will endure fetters; their discoveries and impulses need to be followed up with the most complete freedom of action on the undisputed responsibility of the discoverer or adapter. The most marvellous inventions which have honored science and caused industry to flourish, all bear the name of some individual. The

world would await them in vain from any Assembly or Board of Directors. This is the more inevitable because it is inherent in man's nature to work with a different intensity when he works for himself, from that which he displays when he works for others, especially when these others are unknown to him—shareholders, for example. All who have been or are in this category will bear witness to this truth.

The war which socialism wages with capital is no less deadly to the production of wealth. Where would the miracles of modern industry have been without the colossal accumulation of capital made possible by the present economic system? Who would have assumed the task of amassing, or could actually have amassed, these sums without the prospect, nay, more, the reward, of gains proportionate to the great risks involved in his task? And if capital had not been accumulated and labor employed on so gigantic a scale, how would those laborers have lived who have been supported by capital through good times and bad. For the laborer has been supported, not only by the successful enterprises, but by those which have toppled into the abyss of gigantic failures. Whence would have come the Mont Cenis and St. Gothard tunnels? How would the earth have been covered with railways and the sea with mighty ships, how would comfort and well-being have been carried to the remotest corners of the earth, without the amassing of that hated capital? And who would have taken the trouble to accumulate, if deprived of the hope of profit, of gaining riches, or possibly merely prestige and glory?

No less fatal to the production of wealth is that socialistic whim which insists on systematically confounding labor and capital and on disturbing the former by the hazards of speculation.

Labor, to be fostered, should be put, as far as may be, beyond the reach of hazard and fluctuation. The capitalist, the manufacturer, has at his disposal a complete organization, the necessary knowledge and a scheme of action. It is, moreover, in his interest to provide, to some extent, for the eventualities and risks of all sorts to which his merchandise is subject, and therefore he will be able, up to a certain point, to endure ill-luck without experiencing disaster. A workman's union cannot possess any of these resources. Every blast of the gale disturbs its balance, if it does not overthrow it. The first day that wages fall, work stops, and that same misfortune to which the laborers would have paid no heed had they been content with their modest wage, becomes fatal to their very existence if they have assumed direct responsibility.

As long as these ideas do not pass out of the theoretical stage, or are subjected to single and occasional tests, some may fancy that they find in them grounds for discussion; but the day that saw them applied on a large scale would signal the arrest, if not the destruction, of modern civilization. It would mark the return to an elementary and primitive condition incompatible with the massing of population, the ever increasing needs, the febrile energy and indomitable activity of our day. Now, only the defects of the present system are evident, faults and defects inevitable in all that is human; the hour may come too late when its virtues will be recognized and lamented.

These arguments are not so pointless as they seem to appear to the disciples of socialism; they appeal to the common sense of any one who has received even an average education. If their record deserves criticism it is because they are so well and widely



known. To sum up the situation:—The application of these theories is impossible in large states, therefore, it contains in itself a menace to national life; they aim at the destruction of ownership, and therefore undermine and disorganize the family. Hence, it is as impossible that society should permit the destruction of the foundations on which it rests, as that civilization should renounce its marvellous victories and return to the existence of mediæval communes minus their picturesqueness and their poetry, or to a community life like that of the primitive Christians, less their virtues. All this can never be. And therefore there is no need of a prophet to predict that for many years to come the multitude may be beguiled by promises of earthly bliss, and that the prospect may excite their passions till these occasion catastrophes which, in their turn, may lead to who knows what form of despotism, but that the schemes elaborated in the brains of the prophets and precursors of socialism will never take visible shape, their ideals never find realization.

## II.

Were the character and consequences of socialism pure and simple thus clearly formulated, and the fact brought into prominence, as it has been by its most sincere and ardent apostles, that it is bound radically to alter the basis of society, probably socialism would remain a mere hypothesis and represent one of those currents of opinion, frequent in history, which appear and disappear and leave no trace behind. Serious catastrophe might, at all events, be avoided, by the help of the resistance displayed by cultivated and chosen souls, the healthful attitude of the masses and the wisdom of those set in authority.

But this did not escape the cleverest followers of the new school. So, various branches have spread from the parent stem, each helping, in its fashion, to veil the original ugliness; an attempt has been made to attenuate or dissimulate the consequences by painting them in fresh colors. Among these compromises between the rigidity of the principle and the pliability of the application, that which has been most successful, in that it has to some extent been put in practice, is State Socialism. Under this system, instead of allowing the masses to execute justice for themselves—wherein lies the greatest danger for well-intentioned and tranquil folk—the state constitutes itself universal dispenser of justice and leveller of ranks. The first advantage of this system for the socialists is that it enables them to make use of the mechanism of government for the furtherance of their own schemes.

Nor is this the only advantage which State Socialism presents to these revolutionaries. Most civil governments of to-day are based on a suffrage widely extended or universal. The fewer the limits set to the rights of voting, the more surely will a considerable body, if not the majority, of the electors belong to the class at which socialistic promises are directed, and which is at the same time least capable of recognizing its own vanity. So, on this side, too, all in State Socialism conspires in their favor.

There is no question that this legal method is less turbulent than the revolutionary. And while State Socialism moves slowly under its given conditions, it moves surely. To allay and disarm opposition its first propositions are modest, and not only appear, but are in reality, plausible. Universal education has been greeted with general applause, so has organized charity



in its various forms. All such ideas beguile humanitarians and meet a warm welcome from politicians, not so much because of their natural goodness of heart, as because they hope by these to quiet the populace, still the raging, and above all, to secure popularity for themselves.

After these first feelers, which, if well directed and applied with judgment, above all, if managed with the least possible state interference, might be and probably would be acceptable, follow others more problematical and less justified. Foremost among these come those public works which are begun as an encouragement to labor, but which end, sooner or later, by inculcating a belief in the right to have work provided.

Once entered in this road the state begins to meddle with all organizations. Forgetting the autonomy, once thought so desirable, it begins with the public *bureaus*. It imposes on them new duties, thus necessitating an increased staff of employees, whose duties and privileges it regulates, and for whom it provides pensions. Thus is created a privileged class. Privileged, I say, not fortunate, which lives on the public.

After the public organizations, come private enterprises. Here the state interferes with contracts, fixes their provisions, multiplies obligations, imposes duties. All these new obligations demand supervisors, spies, inspectors, and so the number grows of those who are supported by the public, and the system has spread slowly but surely till it has come to pass that, what with the actual employees in receipt of pay, what with public works, and those private gratuitous services, which must have their reward, a large part of the population is directly or indirectly supported by the remainder. And this, too, under the sanction of law and government. Truly the state in its capa-

city of general benefactor has already made considerable progress toward social equality. This is the dominant characteristic of state socialism, its tendency to paralyze private initiative and in place of this to substitute itself, assuming all the duties of the public, while it continually extends its interference in private affairs with the final aim of increasing the income and the enjoyments of its employees at the expense of those who hold property. Now the result of this system, so attractive at first sight, at all events to a portion of the community, is precisely the opposite of that anticipated, at least as far as the poor are concerned.

In the first place this system paralyzes national energy, with consequences to all the moral and material manifestations of national life which cannot be calculated. But the effect most immediately perceived lies in the fact that under this régime the necessity of providing for all this outlay must unduly strain the resources of the state. The treasury becomes disorganized and depleted, and finds its only resource in augmenting taxes and resorting to tortuous fiscal methods. Now this is the most practical method of providing against inequality of fortune, and if this were the only result, though opinions might vary and objections be raised, still the process would be intelligible from a socialistic point of view. But now begins a work of demolition which is in the interest of nobody.

Once engaged on the incline of attempting to satisfy the needs of the populace at the public expense, it becomes difficult, if not impossible, to pause, and the demand for fresh funds on the part of the state is as unending as are the needs which demand relief. As soon as a given point is reached these necessities begin to encroach on those economies from which capital is formed, and therefore to react on the

reproduction of wealth. The distribution of wealth must of necessity decrease in proportion as its production is hindered or arrested by administrative interference, the diminution of credit, the increase in taxation, or any disturbance of the governmental balance.

Whatever shape one may wish the distribution of wealth to take, it is indubitable that if one thousand divided by ten gives one hundred, five hundred divided by the same number will give fifty. Or, if you insist on maintaining one hundred as quotient, you must divide by only five. And this is the more likely case, because, in a state weighed down by the increase in taxation, the first sensible result will be the decrease of work, and therefore the presence of "unemployed" among those very laborers with arm or brain for whose benefit this complicated system was devised. When the governing class perceives this phenomenon it abounds in expedient and exhausts itself in devising pretexts for labor. But nothing takes the place of free labor and spontaneous production. No expedients, state works or state charities alike, are worth a hundredth part as much as free labor, for the simple reason that the latter augments wealth while the former exhausts it.

In a socialistic state the management of taxes follows the same lines, and so has, after a fashion, an equalizing tendency. Such states usually attack not wealth itself, but those individuals in whose hands the wealth lies. Hence they prefer that taxation should be on a narrow rather than a broad basis, levied on the producer rather than on the consumer, and so on. The shibboleth of their unions is that property-holders must be taxed in preference to, and for the benefit of, those who have no property. Luxury is the favorite theme of their popular orators, luxury the chosen target of the treasury.

It is easy to prove that this system affords little benefit to those whom it professes to assist, those, namely, who possess little or nothing. The phenomena of the circulation of wealth are complicated. But they have one constant law,—that of the continuity with which the phenomena mutually act and react. Let taxation, light or heavy, affect wealth in any one of its manifestations and the reaction will be felt in all the others, though with different degrees of intensity.

Altogether too little heed is paid to this fact to-day, and in countries loaded with debt and staggering under a burden of taxation, wealth, wherever it can be discovered, is made the subject of attack by men of little or no discernment. This, however, does not change the laws by which it is governed, in the smallest respect.

The secret of a clever financier, who finds himself forced to interfere with capital for the public good, consists in tampering with it where it will least affect its integrity, where loss will least prejudice reproduction, in short, he will pluck the fewest possible feathers from the goose that lays the golden eggs. Now this single consideration suffices to condemn the system to which we have alluded.

The heavy taxes which fall on wealth at the very moment of its production are most pernicious, alike because they are in themselves so high, because their basis is, comparatively speaking, narrow, and because of their immediate result. Taxes on products which are fully ready for the market are much less perceptible and harmful, first, because their broad basis makes them represent a minimum rate, and then because they are slow to make their influence felt on the reproduction of wealth. Direct taxation on capital reduces it, and by the same token, diminishes work; taxation on manufactured goods respects capital, and there-

fore does no harm to labor. The latter form is discounted by the extent of production, the former by the diminution of work.

The prejudice against taxation on a broad basis dates from a time when notions as to values and their functions were still elementary. Ask a workman to-day whether he prefers cheap bread or plenty of work, get him to tell you after he has lost his job, whether he would have preferred to keep it and pay a trifle more for bread, and his answer will be decisive on these points. And when the discharged workmen become legion, the answer has the force of a plebiscite.

I have no intention of becoming the apologist of any special form of taxation. As soon as they pass certain limits they all present serious disadvantages. My sole purpose has been to show that they are pernicious just in proportion as they attack the production of wealth. Further, that any diminution in this last, immediately affects the demand for labor, and, therefore, that the result of this system is most disastrous precisely to those whom it professes to benefit. Finally, that the workingman is the one who pays the cost of State Socialism.

These conditions, so harmful for agriculture and property, are disastrous for trade. The peasant who draws his living from the soil, can manage to keep alive at some rate or other, whatever the terms on which he holds possession. But when trade grows slack, or stops, the workman is the first victim to be laid low. Taxes on manufactures as such, or taxes on manufactured products, provided they be light, can be paid from the profits. When they rise above a certain percent. they are paid by labor. If work decreases the gains of the manufacturer diminish and his capital slips from his grasp, but a corresponding

number of operatives loses entirely its means of subsistence.

The less capital becomes, the less becomes production, the less production, the less work. This is true in all branches of trade, whether in luxuries or necessities. For what does luxury, that favorite target of those imprudent friends of the people, and therefore of those who frame budgets, what does luxury represent, if not manifold labor? Every caprice of luxury opens to the artisan a new field for labor or gain, and one of the most fertile, where those who toil reap a rich reward. The essentials of human existence represent a limited demand for labor. The increase in luxury artificially increases the demand, and therefore offers a higher reward for the supply which in civilized societies is always abundant. *Per contra*, its diminution decreases at the same time the demand and leaves the supply uncalled for.

Reduced to the absolute necessities of life the demand for labor would be small indeed. It is precisely here that the difference lies between progressive and civilized countries and those which are not so; hence arise their force, wealth and prosperity. How many families are really supported by those elegant garments, those costly carriages, those dainty *bibelots* which excite the bile and form the constant text of orators in quest of popularity, who often reserve all their conscientious scruples for extravagance alone.

Were all the movement of trade to cease because of the weight of taxation, the loss of public confidence, and the interference of government, any country would soon be reduced to penury, and its misery would increase tenfold. All the charitable institutions, all the sonorous phrases of socialistic orators, would fail to compensate the artisan and the laborer for the diminution of public wealth and the cessation of work.

And if Italy, which for so many reasons should be industrially productive, occupies so inferior a relative position among the other nations, and in spite of some most praiseworthy efforts, holds in this respect almost the lowest rank in Europe, this is chiefly due to the burdens, the interference, the fiscal annoyances to which industry is subjected; and which, therefore, hampers the production of wealth. And if the army of malcontents is each day increased by Italian workmen who get too much talked about, both at home and abroad, this is surely due to many and complex reasons, dependent as a whole on an entire régime, and especially on that part of the system which concerns ethical training and penal legislation. The immediate cause is the lack of work, work by which they may support their families, which may create for them honest interests, and thus become, among this class, an efficacious influence for order and morality. These men become dangerous when they are thrust out into an idle and ill-fed life. The fewer comforts of existence they possess the readier are they to listen to professional agitators of all climes, who make of them the lamentable instruments of their fell designs. Thus it is that socialists beget anarchists, and state socialism feeds social revolution.

The final word of State Socialism, the synthesis of the system, the golden dream of law-abiding socialists, is progressive taxation, which is nothing more or less than a fine, a graduated penalty imposed on wealth; and, as such, an encouragement of pauperism. This tax is frankly and openly laid upon wealth as such; it is aimed at the rich, or those believed to be wealthy, delights the envious crowd, and thus becomes an instrument of popularity for its upholders. This tax is paid exclusively by those economies which are the basis of capital. And thus, in its material and moral effects it repre-

sents the most immediate and direct form in which taxation can impede the production of wealth.

Were this dangerous weapon wielded by a disinterested and discreet power. in a state whose needs and authority were limited, there would at least be a delay in the advent of its disastrous consequences. But in countries administered by a representative government, and with a widely extended suffrage,—which is the condition in nearly all modern nations—whose needs are incessant and ever-increasing, accompanied, of course, by an incessant and ever-increasing demand for funds, where the majority is interested in these needs, and therefore always disposed to vote supplies for their satisfaction, under these circumstances the fatal tendency of the progressive tax is fully manifest. Each fresh augmentation of the tax-rate, though acceptable to those who do not pay, and therefore do not feel it, and not crushing those who belong to the lowest categories which it reaches, falls with five or ten-fold force on those in the higher classes. On the contrary, the former have the majority in the elections and the chambers, while the latter represent only a small minority. Hence, progressive taxation, in countries having this form of government, really represents an organized system which aims at despoiling those who have, for the benefit of those who have not. This "equalizing," this specification, which would not succeed if attempted by revolutionary violence, and in the midst of the terror which revolution inspires, becomes regular and legal by these simple means. And though respect for form may make the method less rapid in its application, and force it to preserve certain hypocrisies and conventions, the result of the process is made certain by the combination of powers secured to the state by its constitution.

Changing the form does not involve changing the substance, and State Socialism defending the same causes leads to the same results. That is to say, attacking wealth and aiming at social equality, it succeeds in paralyzing national energy, decreasing capital, which is another name for national wealth, and in diminishing and disturbing labor, in a word, it weakens all the vital force of the nation.

Such are the economic results of State Socialism. The immediate consequence of these, namely, of the decrease in capital and the diminution or cessation of work, acquires the highest importance when it takes visible shape in the reasonable and justifiable discontent of all social classes. Not only is there discontent among those whose benefit was intended and whose injury has been effected, those who in times of crisis cause revolution,—but it is to be found likewise among those against whom the whole system was imagined and directed, those who though not of the stuff to make revolutions themselves, allow them to proceed when once they are started. Our professional politicians do not pay sufficient heed to the great negative force of this last class. It is as though the engineer of a train on a down-grade should pay no heed to the working of the brake on which he depends for keeping in the right road.

This is one of the political consequences of the system in question. A long list might be made of others no less dangerous, but it would prolong the argument beyond its necessary limits.

Given the condition of things which I have described, when a country has of its own choice prepared the way, the slightest accident will lead to a crisis. And crisis or catastrophe, under these conditions, is a much more serious matter than under the circumstances described above. When a so-

ciety is healthful and flourishing and all the elements of which it is composed are in a vigorous condition, it seems and is easy to repel violent aggression which is based neither on a pretext of justice or of expediency. But when, by a long process, all the force and vigor of a country has been allowed to decay, when its energy is gone, its property sunk in value, trade at a low ebb, labor disturbed and fretting at all restraint, when all are embittered or discontented and when government can only count as its supporters and the friends of order those employees of the public who live at the public expense, in this case, if catastrophe come it is not easily remedied, and its track ploughs deep through history.

But a certain amount of energy is necessary to secure even catastrophe. When energy is paralyzed by historical conditions of political circumstances, the result is still more deplorable. Then it is that we have that decadence and chronic disorganization of which examples are not lacking, and which cause nations to descend from the position which they once occupied in the world.

### III.

So much for the theoretical side; now for the practical. If a map were drawn of the progress of socialism it would be seen that it necessarily flourishes wherever a state, centralized and centralizing, constitutes itself dispenser and arbiter of public wealth. As Providence hears the cry of all humanity, so does the all-provident state that of all its employees; and, in fact, the omnipotent state was engendered by German philosophy as a substitute for Providence in the management of human affairs. Germany is likewise the fatherland of socialism. The same notion with which France was inoculated by the great Revolution has



wound its way, after many vicissitudes, into French institutions, and this nation has seen socialism develop in its bosom, even as in Germany. New Italy, which felt the influence first of the French Revolution and then of Germanic hegemony, constituted herself a state centralized and centralizing, and in a brief space she too saw the socialistic plant begin to sprout and spread within her borders. Spain, also, in proportion as she has adopted similar fashions, had occasion to observe the growth of the same crop.

Not every centralized government is of necessity socialistic. Absolute governments are not so for the most part. But representative governments with an extended suffrage tend to become such. Hence the constitutionalized states of Europe have all, in diverse degrees and fashions, progressed some distance along that road. The first steps, in Germany for instance, were made in the direction of rectifying and disciplining the current, and of curing by a sort of homeopathic treatment—*similar similibus*—the disease of socialism. Even from this point of view, were statistics to be taken of the progress of the socialists, it would be seen that this has followed state socialism step by step.

In the countries just named the effects of this system have differed in degree and extent in proportion to the thoroughness with which it has been applied, and in proportion also to the national character, the strength of its institutions, its reserves of wealth and the resistance which it has opposed. Germany, for example, in spite of the socialism with which it is permeated, is enabled to oppose it by virtue of military institutions, the traditions and hostility of its upper classes, and to a considerable extent, by the reflective and disciplined character of its inhabitants. France, which is perhaps more imminently threatened, re-

sists by virtue of its reserves of wealth. Even Spain, after its kind, resists, by virtue of immemorial tradition. But Italy, which has new institutions, an excitable temperament, whose conservative classes are shattered and disorganized by successive revolutions, and who are, relatively speaking, poor, Italy is perhaps among all nations that most in danger of a social revolution; and this, although within her borders the subversive elements are inferior both in numbers and organization to those found in other nations, and notably in France and Germany. In fact, since the outbreak of the Paris Commune, which took place under exceptional circumstances, Italy has been the first country to develop insurrection on a sufficiently large scale to cause disquiet,—insurrection of which the scope has been openly and brutally socialistic.

The only nations exempt from this curse, and in which, although they enjoy the fullest liberty, socialism, if it exists at all, does so in a Platonic state with no chance of success, are the decentralized nations, where state interference is so slight as to be barely perceptible, and where the system of economic liberty is coextensive with that of political liberty. Such nations neither fear nor attack the colossal fortunes which are rapidly amassed within their borders. They have something better to do, they secure riches under all forms and by all means, they increase their power; they spread over the Atlantic and the Pacific, they civilize Africa. Meanwhile, certain other nations are fighting the battles of the clericals and socialists, wasting their energy in intrigue and internal rancor and their riches in socialistic experiments which feed the evil instead of crushing it.

For the reasons indicated above, this state of things has, for Italy, an exceptional gravity. It cannot, in fact, es-



cape the notice even of the most skeptical observer, that barely a half century after the un hoped for success and hardly credible realization of national independence and liberty had crowned the dreams of so many ages, and the enthusiasms and sacrifices of two entire generations,—persistent and simultaneous attempts at insurrection have occurred in almost all parts of the peninsula. And the most suggestive feature in the unfortunate occurrences, much more noteworthy than the boldness of the chief actors, who are always and everywhere professional rioters, practising their trade whenever they have a chance, has been the attitude of the classes whose interests and creed are precisely opposed to those of the agitators. I refer to the well-to-do, orderly citizens. They have appeared merely to note the realization of some prophecy of old date to be concerned in its issue, but to accept the fatality, if not with conviction, at least with resignation. This passive and negative attitude on the part of this section of the community has been completely ignored by most politicians, who are too often empirical or superficial. It is only a noisy opposition which can command their attention. All the same, this is a decisive fact. A government may be surprised on the open highway by the attack of a small number, but such attacks are easily repelled, or, if the government falls it can be restored without difficulty; but if it falls with the consent of the many who remain within doors, its resuscitation is past praying for.

One of the most pernicious results of State Socialism, of an "equalizing" government, is that of paralyzing and undermining the resistance which forms the natural barrier to the advance of socialism, by alienating the naturally conservative classes and destroying their partisanship. Now it

has been clearly proven that it is impossible to content those for whose benefit the socialistic system was devised, and that it is precisely these who suffer most under this régime. Therefore, such a government is bound to see its branches wither one by one, its own ground for existence cease, and the country which supports it given over to disorder and anarchy.

These general considerations, though briefly stated, are certainly of intimate interest, and possess the value of actuality. The first symptoms of this civil phthisis which we have indicated above have manifested themselves in Italy, a delicate existence, but most precious to all of us.

Moreover, the moment is propitious for a still wider outlook. The fact is that the dread of the results of State Socialism has set all Europe thinking. This preoccupation, kept active by the financial condition of the various European states, has been variously displayed. One of its last manifestations has acquired great publicity because of its origin. There is no doubt that obligatory military service, binding on all citizens, and enduring for a limited period, is a partial application of State Socialism. It is that form of military organization which approaches most nearly to that "armed nation" which, like the progressive tax, is keenly desired by socialists.

It is not very surprising that a proposition for partial disarmament should have come from the absolute monarch of a Power essentially aggressive and military. This fact may have its reasons: such contradictions are not infrequent in politics. What does deserve the most serious consideration is the applause, voluntary or forced, with which a proposition, in itself very problematical, has been welcomed throughout the world. The note struck by the autocrat of the North has set vibrating an effective

chord in all nations and among all classes, for the excessive increase of the budget reacts first on public, and then on private, economy in all the states of Europe. If armies were not so enormously expensive these apprehensions would not be entertained.

Moreover, it is not the armies alone which overload the budgets of the great states of our time; it is an entire system which, because of its dangerous consequences, begins to alarm Europe. A country which is essentially military and one of those least involved in these problems, has dared to face the question as far as its military aspect is concerned; it would be even more obvious and natural that a state which is essentially civil and one of the most deeply interested, should

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undertake to deal with the question from the economic and civil points of view. This is a much wiser course than to be forced during a war with socialism to place your sole reliance on measures of repression. This, too, in our day, follows the law of majorities. When it is employed in the service of a contented majority for the repression of a few rebels, it works efficaciously in the interests of the former; when, on the other hand, it is employed by the few, even if these few constitute the government, against or merely in presence of great discontented majorities, sooner or later it results in the destruction of those who employ it. Hence it has been said that you can do anything with bayonets, except repose upon them.

F. Nobili-Vitelleschi.

## SIBERIAN SILHOUETTES.

There is an indescribable poetry in a return to Siberia after absence. A thrill of emotion vibrates as I drive up to the gate of the first village enclosure. This high, straggling fence keeps the horses and cattle from wandering into the forest. I breathe again the delicious fragrance of the pine woods. I scent the curling film of wood smoke from the chimneys of the mossy-gabled ancient inn. Hard by stands the toy-like church with its green steeple. I hear the barking of innumerable dogs. It is early morning when I arrive, aching after a weary night ride in my *tarantass*, a boat-shaped vehicle, swinging on roped springs. I leap down at the inn door, and on entering, carefully salute the *icon*, and call for the *samovar*.

There is company within. Perhaps a Russian prince in his furs and platinum clasps, or it may be a large family

of Tartars; the men with belts and pistols and wearing black lambskin caps; the women and children with flat noses and no eyebrows. All sit on the ground, eating bright purple horse sausage, odoriferous of musk or garlic. Eat but a crumb of their food, and for the time you are a guest brother.

If it be Sunday, we shall attend early service, standing in the little Byzantine church, listening to the long Slavonic chants with their venerable cadences. Behind the pictured screen and its gilded gates, the long-haired priest worships in a nasal tone. The stupefying gum benzoin smoke is quite distinct in odor from the Catholic incense. In the afternoon, the women will put on their red embroidery and silver trinkets, and will dance in slow, ceremonious steps to minor music, played on instruments like accordions. After a while they sing. Gathered

into a group, one begins a long, shrill romance; the others break in with passionate dialogue, a story of romantic wooing, ending in tragedy. Almost all Siberian songs are sad; the air's "wood notes wild" dropping much into the minor key. Sometimes a long band of exiles goes past, in lax order, watched by silent Cossack guards. These also sing—monotonous marching songs, falling at times to a sob, or rising to a loud patriotic clangor. Their chains bright as silver with the friction; all the men bearded, ragged, but alert.

It was a dim, wintry moonlight when we came to the Angara river. Our driver had been warned at the last post-house that the ice was bad, and that an accident had happened a day or two before. As fast as the river was frozen it was again flooded, and once more frozen. Sleighing across, the horses broke through the top crust, and were fatally trapped in the rotten ice. Our own *istvoitchik* had selected a point to cross where the ice seemed smoothest. As we swept along under the precipitous banks on the farther side, a ghastly sight met our eyes in the moonlight. A horse's head erect, frozen stiff, and a few yards off the legs of a second horse; the sleigh and its human occupants were beneath the ice. How joyful was the sound at last of the grating of our own runners on the gravel shore! On another night we were rudely awakened from sleep by being ricocheted through the air into deep snow. When we had struggled to our feet, we found the *troitka* had leaped the track to escape a long caravan of Bactrian camels that had stolidly passed in the dim moonlight. They were laden with tea from China. The poor beasts looked the more hideous in that they were sewed up in stiff felt to protect them from the intense cold.

The post-houses are under Government control. Horses are in sets of three. Officials can always seize the first *troitka*, so that private travellers have often to wait. Some of the houses are indescribably dirty. I have seen the paper of the room moving with the insect life beneath. If we had to sleep for an hour or two, I brought in the skins from the sleigh, and lay upon the floor. At times I preferred the intense cold outside, and slept in the sleigh. The horses are small, but very hardy. They are often left standing after a long ride in a cold of  $-40^{\circ}$ . They are only fed once in twenty-four hours. I have seen icicles nine inches long hanging from the poor beast's nostrils and belly.

At Tichon Sadonsk in the intensely cold nights the silence was sometimes broken by a loud report as of a cannon. This was the bursting of one of the ice bubbles on the river; a phenomenon I had neither heard of nor read of before.

The streams coming down from the hills were frozen on the surface some six to nine inches thick. The water beneath flowed faster than it could escape, and the pressure, on the principle of a hydraulic press, became irresistible. First, the elasticity of the ice was seen by the rising of circular mounds some six to eight feet in diameter, and from four to five feet high. The bursting point came at last, with a report like an explosion. The water escaped, but soon froze again. I have seen scores of these ice hillocks in a few versts of the river.

Our loghouse had four rooms on a floor. A great brick fireplace in the central angle warmed each room in the two stories. The heat was very grateful. On opening the door at night to admit a friend, the atmosphere of the room, laden with the moisture of our breath, was rolled in upon us by the

cold outer air like steam, and fell in fine snow. Of course, the wooden walls of our rooms were double, and the windows also. The landscape outside was always obscured by the frost on the panes. In the short summer we took off the outside sashes and laid them over trenches dug for them, and under them we raised cucumbers and cabbages. In winter the food is always frozen. Carcasses of sheep can only be divided by axe and saw. Fish caught through holes in the ice freeze while they jump. Eggs are as hard as flints. I have carried them in a sack over my horse's back.

The rivers of Siberia abound with excellent fish; amongst these a beautiful kind of grayling and the incomparable sterlet, quite the most delicious fish I know. Whilst descending the Yenisei, we caught a gigantic sturgeon, yielding many *poods* of coarse black caviare, a dainty highly esteemed. Sturgeon cutlets, with wild chervil for flavoring, are delicious. Qualls and dabchicks are a favorite broil for second breakfast. The bread I found dark, hard and sour, but sustaining. A great deal of *vodka* is drunk, but it is both perilous and nauseous on account of the fusel oil it contains. *Kvass* in summer time is refreshingly acid, and drunk from a small oaken bowl, it is better than cider. Tea is taken at every meal, but it is very weak. Brick tea is detestable. The stamped bricks are used as money till they are worn and dirty; they are then made into a kind of broth. All sorts of abominations are flung into it. The Khirgis have an insatiable appetite for a brew "thick and slab," impossible to Western palates.

I had heard much of the beauty of the Steppes in early summer; but I found them more wonderful than I could ever describe. Only a few days after the snow had melted, the flowers

arrived in astonishing profusion. Lilies came first, small flowers of intense crimson, stretching like pools of blood as far as the eye could see. To these succeeded a yellow flower, also a bulb, a tulip I think. At midsummer, the forget-me-not turns the Steppes vivid blue, challenging the azure of the zenith. In August came the berries. They were principally raspberries, and *morushka*, which resembles a little yellow mulberry, but grows in a trailing shrub. Siberian bilberries exist, and wild red and white currants. Blackberries were fewer. We ate great dishes of *morushka*, powdered with sugar. Bears are gluttonously fond of raspberries. Many a *rencontre* occurs between peasant and Bruin in the thickets while raspberries are ripe: Michael is a fruit feeder then, though children and women are, I expect, always in danger.

Although bears and wolves are plentiful in most districts, and splendid bear skins are to be bought for a few shillings in nearly every village, I had travelled some thousands of miles, both in winter and summer, before I saw my first live bear. I only saw three in five years, and the wolves I met I could number on my ten fingers. Yet I once waited six hours at a post-house to rest the horses I had arrived with, as two of the *troitka*, that should have taken me to the next station, had been eaten by wolves that evening while drinking at a little stream just outside the village. The forests teem with life and food for the bears and wolves, and these animals seldom "take to the road" as a means of livelihood.

Whilst living at Yeniseisk, I heard from an angler friend of a little tributary of the Great Yenisei where the grayling were rising fondly at the gnats and mosquitoes. Taking a few flies, a couple of strong silk lines and a hatchet to cut an impromptu road or two, we set out in an old *telega* with a

couple of horses, one delightfully hot afternoon in June, to drive the twenty versts to the little forest stream. Shortly before reaching it, we stopped at a quiet little village inn. Whilst the old mother handed us wooden bowls of *kvas*, she said:

"You will probably find *Meesha* just by the bridge; he has taken to coming there lately, to bask in the sun."

We thought nothing of her words until, upon galloping down a short, steep hill, we saw just below us, a hundred yards ahead, what at first appeared to be a brown cow or large dog asleep in the middle of the road. Our driver cried:

"There he is, the *sudkinski*! Hold tight, and when I cry out, shout your worst."

He lashed his horses, which, with their ears pricked forward, swerved from side to side of the road in a panic of fear. When we were within thirty yards of the bear, sweeping down like an avalanche, we commenced shouting and yelling, the driver cursing, in explosive Russian, "Michael," "his mother," and his race. The great beast sat up suddenly, blinked at us, and when we were within ten yards of him, gave a loud snort and bounded up the side of the bank, where he sat, slobbering and growling, as we swept by, in a cloud of dust, on the opposite side of the road. A parting shriek sent him off, crashing through the underwood. When we could pull up, half a mile ahead, and the driver got down to adjust the rope harness, he cried:

"Pardon my sins! but *Meesha* can't endure my cursing."

I felt a tingling excitement that made me break into long and loud laughter.

In Siberia, murder is rarely punished by death; the criminal is only sent farther East. If the crime is re-

peated, he is passed on to a distant and more inclement zone. Some convicts at the Lena mines were credited with being murderers to the fifth degree. The nurse of my motherless boy was an exile who had killed her husband. One lost the sharp sense of antipathy to the criminal, so instinctive in the West. Robbery, accompanied with murder, is common enough. I saw four crosses on the road just as I entered Irkutsk, one of which marked the spot where ten people had been murdered in open daylight. At night, robbers wrap themselves in white calico, and, invisible in the snow, cut the luggage from behind the sleighs. Near the mines a considerable trade in illicit spirits is carried on by the *spiriti nocu*, as the smugglers are called. These buy contraband *vodka* at Vitim and carry it into the mining districts, where they make a fabulous profit in exchange for stolen gold. They travel along obscure footpaths which cross the main road at well known points. These are notoriously dangerous spots, from the murders that take place near them. Travellers gallop swiftly by, peering anxiously around. Shafts of old, disused mines hold ghastly secrets. I was told that over a hundred frozen corpses lay in some of these, and that the company is afraid to reopen them for fear of the scandals that would arise.

Returning home one midnight from a distant mine, I rode towards a light in a dell, to find two mounted Cossacks keeping watch over the body of a man who had been murdered a few minutes before. Men are slain for a pair of boots, or even for a passport.

I repeatedly met or overtook bands of exiles going East, in slow, loose order, guarded by Cossacks. Escapes are not infrequent, but they are made at a terrible risk. Days may pass by without food, and flies and mosquitoes are more deadly than wolves. Es-

captioned convicts travel by night, and peasants frequently put food outside their huts for these poor runaways. Forged or stolen passports are carried, but many a man is detected or captured by slight errors in their preparation. The Cossacks have to deliver at the journey's end the exact number of convicts they started with; and ghastly tales are told of peasants kidnapped to make up the number for those who have escaped *en route*.

Once when I was travelling on a by-road with a governor of the district, he pointed out to me a ragged man as an "escaped." He covered him with his revolver, and called the man to him, saying, "Show me your passport!" The man turned white and trembled. "Unbutton your coat!" shouted the officer. The man obeyed and fell on his knees. There were the polished iron chains that he had not been able to remove. The officer broke into a merciful laugh, and throwing him a piece of silver, allowed him to escape.

In Siberia, the most naïve and grotesque fetishism exists side by side with not a little Western emancipation. More than once we met with the stone that was going on pilgrimage; a large, round block of granite journeying to a distant shrine or monastery. The orthodox are entreated to roll it a few yards on the way, as an act of piety. It will be years on the road, but it will arrive at last.

In the Museum of Tobolsk are relics of Ermsk, the discoverer of Siberia in A. D. 1581. Here are some of the weapons of torture of Ivan the Terrible,—knouts with lead balls at the ends of the thongs, and branding irons for convicts' faces. On my way out I saw the exiled bell, which had been

banished from Ooglitich two hundred and fifty years ago for ringing the alarm which nearly betrayed a conspiracy. It was publicly flogged and its hammer removed. On my return to Tobolsk, the bell was gone. It had served its full time, and had been sent back to Ooglitich!

For five days we journeyed up the Lena. I bought a long, gondola-like boat. All day three horses with a long tow-line drew us, while they waded through the shallows. Forests came down to the water's edge. The scenery was impressive, but very lonely. One long day our *troitka* had been ridden by a boy and a girl of ten and eleven. At night we roped up, and I saw with amazement the two children start back again in the twilight, laughing as they splashed through the shallows without a shade of fear.

But these memories are endless. There is witchcraft in them. I can never forget this amiable land or its hospitable people. A great calamity fell on me there; but the sympathy and inexpressible tenderness I met with will never fade from my memory while life lasts. I do not believe a nobler or more generous people exists in the world. I have been in the ice-bound tundras of the mouth of the Yenisei, on the Obi, the Lena, the Angara, and a score of other rivers; in Tomsk, Krasniarsk and Irkutsk, and other cities; I do not say evil men are not to be found there. I only speak bare truth when I declare I met with nothing during five long years but good comradeship from men and gracious providence from women. I was never cheated, wronged or betrayed by great or simple.

May Siberia prosper!

Evan Aspray.



THE ETCHINGHAM LETTERS.

XIII.

From Miss Elizabeth Etchingham, 83 Hans Place, London, S. W., to Sir Richard Etchingham, Tolcarne, Much Buckland, Wessex.

Dear, Dearest Dickory,—“Trusty and wel beloved, we greet you well.” “Trusty and wel beloved,” you are missed. There was more luck about the house when you were here. Tracy too is missed; and his little empty collar, with its inscription, 83 Hans Place, has now something of the sacred relique about it in Cynthia’s eyes. But it was cruel to keep him in London. Spaniels are not the dogs for a town, and I always thought that his frolic humor would land him under a wheel. Now, I suppose, he is racing round and round the lawn, fringes and lovelocks flowing in the wind. Does he still pause in his impetuous career to insult Eld in the person of blind old Merlin with belated invitations to play?

I found your notebook after you were gone yesterday, hidden away with my sewing tools. I remember you pushed it under a pyramid of embroidery silks to screen it from Laura’s inquisitorial eyes, and then forgot it, careless creature. (No, you are not really careless.) I looked into the book again before sending it after you, and I mean to exchange my derivation of the name Solomon’s Seal for Mr. Follett’s. His is the prettier as well as the more ancient. The seventeenth-century garden-books explain the name by the circles that show when the root is cut, which “do somewhat represent a seal.” The doctrine of signatures has always had a fascination for me. I should like to believe, as I read once upon a time in Cole’s “Adam in Eden,”

that “the fruit of the Pome-citron tree being like to the heart in form, is a very sovereign cordiall for the same.” That the walnut, having the perfect signature of the head, is the one thing needful for the brain; that viper’s bugloss is an especial remedy against the bitings of vipers and all other serpents, “as is betrayed by both stalk and seed.” The author of the book in question is a staunch upholder of the doctrine of signatures, yet he condemns fanciful theorizing in others, and will not accept the story told by a fellow herbalist, Culpeper, I think, of the Earl of Essex, his horses, which being drawn up in a body lost their shoes upon the downs near Tiverton, because moon-wort—loosener of locks, fetters, and shoes—grows upon heaths. Culpeper “was very unable to prove” that moon-wort grew upon Tiverton downs, and the tale of the lost shoes must, therefore, in his more cautious contemporary’s opinion, be taken with a grain of salt.

It was to-day, was it not? that Mr. Follett was to guide your steps to Bratton Leys, there to see the “devil’s door” in the north wall of the church? I suppose the door is no longer thrown open during the Baptismal service, for the devil to escape at the Renunciation, and carefully bolted and barred on all other occasions? Mr. Shipley visited us yesterday evening. He seemed very sorry to have come just too late to encounter you. I told him that I had heard that when Mediævalists met, the devil, who ruled their period, had, naturally enough, taken a prominent part in the conversation, and he answered that the conversation was of angels too. Tell Margaret that I commend her for asking, as, according to Mr.

Shipley, she did, how Fra Angelico, who began painting with prayer, could have seen the devil at his worst. She seems to have inquired too, *à propos* of the inferiority of Italian demons to the Flemish variety, if Spinello's devil, who slew the artist that created him by appearing in a dream, and asking the terrified painter where he had seen him looking so hideous as in the fresco, and why he ventured to offer him so humiliating an affront, was not terrific enough. The shock of so unusual an incident naturally killed Spinello, and Mr. Shipley thinks that Margaret has substantiated the claim of the Italian devil to a prominent place in Pandemonium.

Later.—I was sent for by Laura this afternoon, and found the Vivians and Alice Newton in the drawing-room. "I am not again preventing your finishing a letter to Richard, I hope, as he only left us *yesterday*," poor aggrieved Laura said in her huffed tone; the expression of which hope excited Mrs. Vivian's easily roused curiosity, and, as she does not scruple to put questions when her interest is awakened, I found myself under cross-examination, and when asked what I was writing to you about to-day, answered, "I am writing to Richard about the devil." I wish words would paint the expression of Laura's face. "The devil," Mrs. Vivian cried with increased vivacity, "that's most interesting. Somebody was telling me about the devil the other evening and amused me very much. A man's devil was just the god of his enemy, was he not? and did not the devil first of all come out of Persia?" Laura murmured something about the devil and the fruit of the tree of knowledge. "Oh, my dear Lady Etchingham," exclaimed Mrs. Vivian with her sweetest smile, "after your serpent you have to wait centuries for your devil. For your familiar horned, hoofed, satyr devil I feel pretty sure that you

have to wait till the Middle Ages. What is the date of the satyr devil, John?" Mr. Vivian, to whom, as he mechanically stroked Azore, Alice Newton with admirable patience was trying to talk, had not time to produce, if he knew it, the date of the horned, hoofed apparition's first appearance, before Mrs. Vivian's tide of words flowed on again. "And I believe that the further east you go the huger and more hideous the devils become. But Paris was a great place for devils, and Dante went there for his devils, his three-headed devils, as I go for my clothes. And do, Elizabeth, if you are writing, ask Sir Richard if he thinks those dreadful Campo Santo devils—the Campo Santo of Pisa—and those at Mount Athos are cousins? and if they can have flown into Italy from Greece and into Greece from Persia? It's a bore not to know." I was thinking that Blake and *sal volatile* would have to be rung for on Laura's behalf, and a copy of the Papal bull that teaches the exorcising of fiends for the benefit of us all, but fortunately at that moment in came Colonel Newton, and to my unspeakable relief I soon heard: "You can begin a war without an army, but you can't finish one;" and Laura's response, "Oh, no, of course."

Mrs. Vivian, however, had by no means talked herself out, and went on to demand sympathy in piteous accents on the count of the "frightful, horrible, hideous Christian Death" that had supplanted the "pretty Death" of the Pagans. "Yes," Alice Newton said, "it would be interesting to trace the twin-brother of Sleep to the stern deity of the tragedians and on to the ghastly personification of Death which had little to separate it from the mediæval devil. Elizabeth, do you remember the winged figure girded with a sheathed sword, from the temple, I think, of the Ephesian Artemis? The face is so dreamy and wistful and the

hand lifted as if beckoning. It was thought by some, was it not? to represent Eros, and by some, Thanatos. The doubt is attractive." Alice then looked as if she had forgotten all of us till jerked back by Colonel Newton, who broke away from Mrs. Vivian's announcement that the Christian artist's daughter of Herodias and John Baptist's head was just the Pagan Muse holding a mask, to ask Alice if she had remembered to tell the servants that he was dining out. "Jupiter and his eagle were used up, Hugo Ennismore says, for St. John the Evangelist, and the poor Cupids had to be angels," was what I then heard Mrs. Vivian say, for want of a male listener, to Laura. "If Nature is a spendthrift, Art was always economical, wasn't it, Elizabeth?"

Mrs. Vivian sent you a sheaf of amicable messages. She was very sorry not to have seen you. You must come and dine, "just ourselves," when you are next in London. "If Sir Richard had married my daughter," she told Alice Newton, "I should not so much have minded. Sir Richard is charming, very amusing, and original. But I have a son-in-law whose hobby is drains, and whose Paradise is a Trades Union Congress."

Thursday evening.—Your letter has come. Do you remember tying my hair to the back of my chair when my eyes and attention were riveted to the multiplication tables, and then exclaiming "Luna has another bird!" with the object of seeing your sister rise, chair and all, on the strength of a cat's imaginary misdemeanor? Dear, your pronounced references to Mrs. Tallis, who struck 70 the day you were born, somehow remind me of your old proclivities. You may tell Mrs. Tallis from me, that though she treats Margaret "almost as a daughter," by a clause in our father's will no one can adopt *you* without my permission, and

that permission I have not the slightest intention of granting. After Margaret you belong to me, and I command you, by holy obedience, to resign yourself meekly to the inevitable.

No, I don't think your girl and boy have had the life trodden out of them. I like the natural growth, and never could believe in the crushing beyond recognition of minds and spirits. Nor is there any excuse for it nowadays, for it is not the fashion of the age to obliterate, as it was more or less in our childhood. The other way is the happier, and, as far as I can see, unwilling obedience is little better than rebellion. "Liberty kindleth love, love refuseth no labour, labour obtaineth whatsoever it seeketh." Nor do I approve the crushing of parents, and if Margaret or Arthur bully you, be so good as to send them to me for correction. You shall not be bullied either. You have not yet, I think, heard Mrs. Vivian on the subject of her sons? Reggie, she says, makes her life a burden to her when she takes herself to Eton to see him. He prods and pokes her with his elbow at every turn, lest she outrage the proprieties, and sends her home bruised black and blue. He would rather see her burnt, she informs everybody, than button the lowest button of his waistcoat, roll up his umbrella, or walk down the roadway instead of on the pavement. No woman, she declares, is enslaved by fashion and the opinion of contemporaries to the extent that a schoolboy is. Hugh, when visited at Oxbridge, she finds equally exacting in another direction, and her theory is that, as girls grow free and easy, boys grow precise. Hugh has something of the Methodist or the Quaker in his temper of mind, according to his mother, and is constantly correcting her for exaggeration, whilst himself affixing D. V. to the announcement of his plans. "He

dragoons his sisters as though he were a mother of the early Victorian period, and his propriety is something absolutely abnormal."

Charles' address has not yet come our way. Here, for the sake of peace, I ignore his political proceedings. Honest Harry, as we know, thinks sin and radicalism one and the same thing, and considers the family disgraced by Charles' politics. What Charles' politics are I don't myself quite know, and you must enlighten me. He and Minnie are in Dampshire now. Mrs. Vivian tells, that when driving across country and reciting his speeches to Minnie, Charles, who certainly is a shockingly bad driver, was jerked out of the dog-cart. Mrs. Vivian assures me that Minnie was far too deeply engrossed in thinking out the plot of her next novel to notice, till the horse of its own accord drew up, that her husband was no longer seated at her side, but prostrate in the ditch.

Poor Minnie is in her mother's bad books at present. She is staying at Clayshott with "a most horrible, rich, vulgar woman, a Mrs. Potters, who fawns upon her in the hopes of getting something out of her: which Minnie, taken in by fulsome flattery, is too dense to see." (I am again quoting.) The Tory *grande dame* of the place is Lady Leyton, and the Leytons and the Vivians, though Minnie apparently ignores or forgets it, are old family friends. Lord Leyton is a builder of model cottages, and Lady Leyton is one of the kindest old women in the world, "a friend of the poor," whose pony carriage if not at one cottage door is at another. Into this Conservative Arcadia poor Minnie, backed by Mrs. Vivian's *bête noire*—Mrs. Potters—and armored with all the courage that crude feminine Radicalism inspires, is about to penetrate. Do you think she will escape intact? Charles, Minnie and the babies were at Vivian-End

in Easter week. Little Harry had some unusual experiences, and came running in from the garden in hot haste to say, "Mim, Mim, I hear the slugs eating Gran's flowers."

The question of the existence of ancient vineyards in Britain is, I see, discussed in one of the newspapers. There were vineyards at Ely, at all events, a very long while ago, according to the Latin rhyme, which was Englished long ago too. I was too lazy to send the rhyme to the newspaper—here is the 17th Century Englished version for you:—

Four things of Elie Towne much  
spoken are  
The Leaden Lanthorne, Maries Chap-  
pel rare  
The mighty Mil-hill in the Minster  
field  
And fruitful Vineyards which sweet  
Wines do yield.

Good-bye for now, Dickory, and  
write again soon.

*"Je prie à Dieu que il vous doint ce que  
vostre cœur désir."*

Elizabeth.

#### XIV.

Sir Richard Etchingam, Tolcarne, to  
Miss Elizabeth Etchingam, London.

My Dear Elizabeth.—Charles has sent me a proof or early copy of the address to the electors of the Clayshott division. There is a long paragraph about ground values and betterment, the utility of which in a Dampshire farming district is not obvious to my mind; but then I don't understand home politics. Also the inevitable denunciation of frontier wars, which I suspect will not be relished, as a Clayshott man has got his promotion as sergeant-major, and has been writing home enthusiastic letters about Johnny Gurkha (this information is not from my venerable Egeria, Mrs. Tallis, but from the gos-

slip of the last parish council meeting). Also the iniquity of the Indian laws against the native press (there are no press laws and no distinction between native or vernacular and Anglo-Indian publications, and the "Anglo-Indian community" has turned against the Government on that question just because they most properly refused to make any such distinction, but that is a detail which I shall not impart to Charles, as he would not believe a prejudiced official). Also a jeremiad on the wickedness of subsidizing landlords; I believe the landlords in that part of Dampshire happen to be popular. But you will doubtless have a copy of the thing too, with or without official commentary. For my part, I must follow the example of higher Powers by issuing a proclamation of strict neutrality.

Mr. Weekes has negotiated an exchange of duty, to the relief of all parties. I don't think we shall see him here again.

Tracy is very well and happy, though we cannot get Merlin to treat him with anything better than dignified acquiescence. Merlin has arrived at the stage of the very holy Brahman who, having fulfilled all his duties as a householder, left a son to maintain the family sacrifices, and mastered all the wisdom of the Upanishads, retires from the world and spends the rest of his life in pure meditation; which, being reduced to terms of canine philosophy, signifies that Merlin has ceased to hunt rabbits, and is almost indifferent to the mention of rats.

If Mrs. Vivian knew anything about Christian art, says the Vicar, she would know that the prevalence of the skull and cross-bones business in churches dates from the Renaissance, rather late in that, and not from the Middle Ages. This, of course, said I, does not alter the fact that any common Athenian stonemason, from the

days of Pericles to those of the Antonines (let us say, to be on the safe side), could make a dignified and graceful work of art of a funeral monument, and certainly the average modern sculptor, let alone stonemason, can't. No, says the Vicar, but that is not because he is oppressed by superstitious ideas; it is because he generally has no ideas at all. We agreed that professing and calling oneself a heathen does not suffice to make one an artist; and also, India having taught me to be patient before many mysteries, I submitted to Mr. Follett that we really know next to nothing about the conditions—beyond the obvious ones of available material, adequate skill of handicraft, and a certain superfluity of wealth and leisure—which determine an epoch of great art or good taste. Do we know, by the way, whether the Athenians of the classic age would not have admired, if they had ever had the chance, our inventions which are denounced in their name? Indian princes—able ones, too—who live in a splendid harmony of form and color, the envy of European artists, delight in our musical boxes and childish mechanical toys. So did Italian noblemen in the seventeenth century, as witness Lassels' "Voyage of Italy." And are we not wringing our hands to see the abominations of Brussels and Kidderminster patterns spoiling the design of Asiatic carpets? Bad taste, one fears, is at least as catching as good.

By the way, you have not seen Lassels, at least not my copy; the spoils of Brindisi, where it had drifted somehow to that pleasant little book-shop on the quay where a German couple are delighted to sell you the comic pictures of Munich. I meant to bring it to town, but forgot. "The Voyage of Italy, or a complete journey through Italy. In Two Parts. With the *Characters* of the *People*, and the Description of the



*Chief Towns, Churches, Monasteries, Tombs, Libraries, Pallaces, Villa's, Gardens, Pictures, Statues, and Antiquities.* As also of the *Interest, Government, Riches, Force, etc.*, of all the *Princes.* With Instructions concerning *Travel.* By Richard Lassels, Gent., who Travelled through *Italy* Five times, as Tutor to several of the *English Nobility and Gentry.* Never before Extant. Newly printed at Paris, and are to be sold in *London,* by *John Starkey,* at the *Mitre, in Fleet-street near Temple-Barr,* 1670." An ample title this for a plain squat little book of just under 450 pages. The author was an English Catholic. His highest epithet of praise is "neat"; St. Peter's at Rome, if I remember right, is "exceeding neat." At Florence he heard that there had been such a person as Dante, for he mentions among other famous men whose tombs you may see in the Duomo, "Dante the Florentine Poet, whose true picture is yet to be seen here in a red gown." He seems to have thought that Joannes Acutius, "an English knight and General anciently of the Pisani," ought to have been Sharpe by name, and to have had some difficulty in believing that *Acutius* represents *Hawkwood.* Mr. Lassels was not a very clever man.

What really interested him at Florence was, that "by special favour we got the sight of the *Great Dukes fair Diamond,* which he alwayes keeps under lock and key. Its absolutely the fairest in *Europe.* It weigheth 138 carats, and its almost an inch thick: and then our Jewellers will tell you what its worth." And wherever Lassels went he was on the lookout for such matters as fancy clocks, watches in a walnut-shell, and "wetting sports"—the unexpected fountains which spring up to surprise the unwary visitor in great men's gardens. I have heard that a fine specimen of this Italian jest, which continued in fash-

ion well into the eighteenth century, is extant and in good order at Chatsworth. Why did not the Italian adventurers who left their mark on the domestic architecture and decoration of Indian noblemen, introduce "wetting sports" as a regular part of the ornaments that no prince's palace should be without? The princes of the Mogul period would certainly have taken to them. Want of engineering resources, perhaps, though the hydraulics required of that kind of diversion are simple enough.

Jem has been investigating the roads north of London (I think he had some examination or conference at Mill Hill), and sends me a savage growl at the Middlesex County Council for the state in which they leave their roads in those parts. Riding down from Mill Hill to Hendon, he says, is like being tossed in a blanket among sacks full of stones; and the steep places are really almost dangerous, by reason of their roughness, to any one but an experienced rider—not merely "dangerous" in the danger-board sense, which, in the home counties at any rate, means, with very few exceptions, that you can ride down with care in ordinary conditions of weather and surface.

Jem also says that he is pleased with Arthur's promise of scholarship, which he took some little pains to look into. He greatly approves the old Eton plan of letting boys read the classics in considerable masses and acquire a feeling for them as literature, instead of treating them as repertoires of linguistic puzzles. There is plenty of time at the University to find out how hard the hard places of easy authors really are. But, Jem says, there are really no easy Latin authors and very few Greek.

I wonder now whether Tennyson's "Promise of May" contains a cryptic allusion to May weather. It is strange



that the name of that poetic month is conspicuous in the two least good pieces of work he ever did (the other being the *May Queen*). Mr. Follett remembers Tennyson once saying, a long time ago, that an English summer was like living in an undressed salad. All the neighbors are grumbling at the unseasonable weather. I

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think of what the sun is now in the desert round Bikanir, and feel like Anson's sailors when they hailed the "cheerful gray sky" on the Peruvian coast after a long baking in the south seas.

Your loving brother, Dickory.

P. S.—I must send you Lassels by post. He will amuse you.

*(To be continued.)*

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### SUN OF MY SOUL.

Translated into Latin (the original metre being retained).

BY ARTHUR W. LITTLE, L. H. D.

Jesu, Sol meæ animæ,  
Nox nunquam est adstante Te;  
Ne surgat ulla nebula  
Quæ celet Te terrigena!

Quum somnus gratus, sicut ros,  
In meos cadit oculos,  
Sit mihi hæc æterna spes—  
In sinu Jesu requies!

Sis mecum die, sine Te  
Nec enim possum vivere;  
Et nocte, namque timeo  
Moriri sine Domino.

Siquis Tuorum hodie sit  
Qui vocem Dei spreverit,  
Nunc, Jesu, gratiam illi da,  
Peccatis illum libera!

Ægros benigne custodi,  
Egenis large subveni,  
Lugentibus solatium  
Somnumque da dulcissimum!

Veni beatum nos mane,  
Et arcto duc itinere  
Dum amor amplectatur nos  
Divinus inter cœlicos.

## WEAVER BIRDS.

With all our knowledge of political economy, of sociology, of evolution, we human kind have much to learn from the birds which fly in the air—birds which follow Mother Nature's clear and emphatic instructions, which watch, observe, and obey the simple rules of living. Who knows so well the art of living, the science of happiness, and the wisdom of a light heart, as a bird? Its day is one live-long symphony of joy, a lyric of melody, with a soft lullaby refrain when the nest is full. It rises early, after short hours of light sleeping, with dreams of fairy meadows and ripe fruits, and needs no feathered Solomon to speak the reproach, "Go to the ant, thou sluggard," for it has no laggards in the camp. The new morning rings with its glad matins—a signal for activity and business. Though a small animal, the bird has a large appetite; large in comparison with the reptile, who eats little. To have a full larder and tempting delicacies at hand needs thrift and briskness, and the active little body is ever on the alert to scramble for dainty and nutritious morsels. It is an excellent housekeeper and economist, and puts into the day as much work and play as the hours will hold.

The odd and marvellous habits of birds provide a subject of endless interest. The unique way in which some species build their nests, the sense shown by others in feigning death or wounds to escape capture, the many deceptions practised to lure enemies away from the nest, the odd manoeuvres enacted to gain food and water without falling into danger, and many other curious traits in which they exhibit much common sense, if not an actual power of reasoning, are

a source of delightful study to any one who has a love of nature.

The architecture of a bird's house might be the envy of the human *hausfrau*. No jerry-building is exhibited, but firm and strong habitations, raised after the inmates' own plan and desire. Cupboards in the right corners, no draughty windows, or doors in wrong places, no smoky chimneys or leaking boilers, but a haven of rest, snug, warm, peaceful, and as downy as the softest bed—a work of love and gladness.

The springtime, the only pretty singing time,

is the time of hilarity and love-making, the honeymoon of the birds; all is gay and bridal at this season. The young hearts are swelling with joy, the wee throats are bursting with glad song, and the little lovers together begin to build their home. The dainty wife has no winter clothing to brush and mend and put by, no anxiety in rigging out of summer suits for herself and her prospective little ones, for kindly Nature supplies her wardrobe, and in no niggardly fashion. Each little band has its own characteristic garb—gay and gaudy, or sombre, as the taste or necessity suits. Red military coats, royal gowns of purple, sun-tipped bonnets, buff surtouts, green vests, or blue tunics, all of one's own growing, perfect in fit, style, and texture, soft, warm, and becoming, with no worry or trouble of tailor or costumier in the rear.

One has heard it said that a medical nurse, or a Sister of Mercy, may go alone into the lowest haunts of our big towns unmolested; their dress is a passport and a protection, ensuring deference from the rough hearts which,

brutal as they are, respect the souls who minister to the sick and poor. And so our little plumed friends assume a protective covering among their enemies. Flocks of small birds are to be seen living in the great Sahara desert that cultivate sandy-colored costumes, and thus deceive the sharp eyes of their formidable foes. The Trumpeter Bullfinch—a gay little buck, choosing its fine brownish-red uniform not for brilliancy only, but as Robin Hood chose his green suit, so that he might more effectually hide from his prey on the hills and in the vales of Sherwood—the Trumpeter dons a coat difficult to detect on the ochre-colored rocks of the islands it inhabits. And the Ptarmigan, when the moors are dark and heathery, capers about in the darkest of brown or gray tailoring; but when its haunts on the mountain sides are like angels' wings with the glistening snows, he, too, puts on his bridal white, and flicks his downy feathers in the sunlight, and who knows which is the snow and which is the bird? It takes a sharp eye to detect, and he is saved many tussles, any of which might have proved fatal.

Of wonderful mechanism is the covering of feathers, heritage of birds alone; besides lending grace and color to the small forms, they are a means of airy flight through the bright sky, carrying the traveller through miles of air and glorious sunshine to a land whither he would go. They maintain, too, the proper temperature of the blood, and have many and other uses which make bird-life comfortable and jubilant.

Man walks on his foot soles—sturdy, loud; tramps in boots and wears out shoe leather, but the bird, dainty as a ballet-dancer, trips airily on its toes, suggests music with every hop. In this, its whole tribe have but two exceptions, the family of Auks and the

Guillemots, of heavy and laborious flight.

The bird is endowed with an excess of life and energy. If you could follow some flocks of migrating birds over land and sea, you would find a hundred miles was but an easy flight, and they would arrive lively and unexhausted—in a few hours he crosses from one continent to another—many thousands of miles he puts behind him in days you could count on one hand. An ostrich with its wiry legs—a swift with its long wings—a cassowary—a carrier pigeon, and a score of others can skim the desert swifter than a race steed, and leave him far behind, exhausted and broken-winded. An albatross, too, will lead a fast sailing vessel through the ocean two hundred miles and more.

Ah, and the bird too is a sharp-witted little animal, with plenty of sagacity and cunning; it is a student of nature and humanity, and if not an actual Comte, or Schelling, or Spencer, it is a reasoner and philosopher after its own school. It has not listened to the rifle and the shot guns repeatedly without thinking its own thoughts and drawing its own conclusions. In time it has learned to ignore the former, and go leisurely on pecking its lunch or making its toilet, not so much as lifting a beak to show the sportsman its disdain of the flying bullets. Yes, and if experience affords it the opportunity, it learns to know that every seventh day there is rest and repose, when the air is not rent by gun or rattling clappers, more quickly than dogs learn the day of exclusion from church parade and Sunday frolic. As quick to learn as a child, the bird hears a song and repeats it, and if carried young from its home and kindred, will listen to, and imitate the song of foreigners, and in captivity will warble jubilantly the air it has learned in its new surroundings, or even remember

the mother song, and in some cases be trained to imitate the human voice.

What little actors they are; they can admirably feign wounds or death, more naturally than your mendicant can feign his broken limbs, or pitiful distortions. More than once has a cornrake been carelessly pocketed, and left for dead, but in an opportune moment made its escape. Game and other birds have been hustled into bags or left on the ground, mortally wounded, as the huntsman believed, but before long, the bag has been lighter, and the bird has flown. It is not always feigning, however; they are sensitive little creatures, and the shock has, in some cases, been great enough to paralyze them, and they have lain as dead in a stupor of fear, but when the fit of terror has passed, having revived, they have found the use of their wings.

What patterns of cosiness, security and economy, are the homes of the birds; the little inmates are indeed exemplary domestics, though their houses are as various as the characters of the builders. No nests are more curious than those of the Weaver birds, of which there are between two and three hundred species. They are a family of large finches, the bulk having an equipment in which a yellowish red tint predominates, though some of the smaller families show much variety in taste, and display every shade of gray and red and brown. The head and face is dark, with a slender, broad beak, the back a subdued orange, and the lower part of the body like our English robins in summer. In Central and Western Africa, they are mostly at home, though they inhabit other warm countries. They are regular chatterboxes and lovers of gossip, never in want of a subject for conversation. During the time of incubation, they live in large settlements, a whole town of them tenting together, where

they have a regular good time. Talk about the bustle of the London season—it is nothing to the excitement and life which prevails in a weavers' settlement at nesting time.

They have earned their name by the habit of weaving and intertwining vegetable fibres to form their nests. Mr. Stephens, after observing their peculiar habits for many years, was the first to christen them "the weavers," though Mr. Latham, forty years earlier, had spoken of the Weaver Oriole, a species of Ethiopian finch. The nests of some of the Weavers are so strong and firm that the rain cannot penetrate, and the wind cannot shake them from their foundations. These are heavy, massive structures, closely and uniformly interwoven with tendrils or long grasses, twisted round the branches of trees and hanging over the water, and when there are many dozens of these hanging near together they form an artistic and substantial fringe. Some of them prefer to hang their homes from the eaves of the native huts, or from the thatched bungalows, and are quite ready for any overtures of friendship from the inmates. The chamber is round as a ball, with a long passage for entrance and exit; coarse, strong grass is used for the outside, the inner walls are of finer grasses, and lined with soft, warm materials; bits of wool from the sheep's backs, hair, shreds of clothing, feathers, worsted, colored thread, bits of soft moss or lichen, or any suitable odds and ends the birds may come across, the more brilliant in hue the better. In some cases, the entrance of the nest is almost entirely hidden by long, overhanging grasses and roots. Another trick they have is to use stiff grass stalks, leaving the exterior of the nest "bristling with sharp points, like the skin of a hedgehog," or by inserting sharp thorns into the walls of their nests with the

points sticking outwards, they make an invasion of their territories by monkeys or snakes an unpleasant experience. There are dwellings of this same species not more than seven inches long and four and a half broad, light and delicate, thinly interwoven, like dainty and fragile basket work—some kidney shaped—others take their patterns from the goat's horns, while others follow the form of a re-tort, and leave the opening at the side. The birds are most fastidious in the making of their villa residences, and if one is not quite according to their hypercritical taste, they will ruthlessly tear it to pieces and begin another. Some birds prefer a solitary nook in which to build their love bower, but there are exceptions to this, as to every other rule. The Turckling Grakles are a decided exception; they choose to build in small colonies of twenty or thirty, and roost in flocks of four or five hundred, jostling and hustling one another, and twittering, with voices like so many various toned bells. A more notable exception, a regular bird of society, is the Sociable Grosbeak, one of the Weaver family, the Christopher Wren of the bird world, a genius in architecture. This finch is a native of hot countries, especially West and South Africa, India, Java and Madagascar. It is a small bird, in build much like our English sparrow. The female is sombre in hue, and its mate is mostly brown, with mottled coat, and buff surtout. But some of the males display a showier taste, and with an air of dandyism and holiday attire, flourish a plumage of crimson, scarlet, or gold, with background of bright jet.

This species will marshal together from one to two hundred, and begin to build a colony of nests under one sloping roof, which they make strong and thick enough to be impervious to the heaviest storms. Lofty trees are

preferred, such as the giraffe thorn, an acacia upon which the giraffe is fond of feeding; a strong, hardy tree, which grows in arid districts. Circumstances, however, do not always suit themselves to the fancies of these high-flown little folk, and they have to come down to circumstances, and condescend to build on lowly foundations, such as the arborescent alve, or other humble growths. A secluded spot is selected, sheltered from the fierce winds prevalent in tropical countries. The community begin conjointly to build the general roof, which is a source of great activity and interest to them all. For this, they collect flattened reeds, and long, wiry, tough grasses. Booschmanle-grass is a favorite, which is rendered more pliable by an application of saliva from the architect's beak. These they lay over the tree branches, and weave together most ingeniously; often a portion of the principal branch becomes a part of its texture. This is compactly and firmly worked together in the form of an irregular, sloping roof, or immense beehive; in fact, the structure has often been mistaken for a native hut, or gigantic fungus, by travellers who catch sight of it from the distance.

Then, under the eaves, are the numerous compartments, one of which each pair of birds build for themselves with the same long, coarse grass. This is protected from rain and wind by the impenetrable roof above. The nest is three or four inches in diameter, generally; there is a separate opening for each small abode, though sometimes the inmates are especially sociable, and the same door leads into two or three rooms, severally inhabited by one pair of birds, and separated by a thin partition. The mouth of the nest, which is placed downwards, is narrow and small. This wonderful construction is not only the outcome of a

social instinct, but a means of preservation against the wild hurricanes, and attacks from the various foes of this bird. A species of small parrot, numerous in Africa, is a declared enemy of the sociable weaver; he and his friends come in battle array, and force an entrance into the colony of nests, and evict the rightful tenants.

It is usual for the male to construct the exterior of the nest, to see that the outer walls are securely plastered, and the roof well pointed, while the female, true to the feminine instinct, chooses to work within. When the framework is made, they pass the flexible stems in and out from one to the other; and their next operation is to separate the egg department from the corridor of the nest. Between these they devise a loop or wicker handle, which acts as a perch, as well as keeping the crib of the nestlings secure. Upon this perch or loop the little wife spends her waiting time, while the husband goes abroad for fresh materials wherewith to finish their abode, and no pair of human beings could be more assiduous in their labors than these new lovers. Though they never exceed three or four hours at a time, for they remember that "all work and no play makes Jack a dull boy," the nest seldom takes longer than a week or eight days to complete.

The weaver never uses the same nest a second season, though he may build under the old roof one year after another, sometimes fixing the new nursery below, or alongside the former one. In time the population, and consequently, the necessary buildings, increase so largely that it is not unusual for the strong branches to be so overweighted that they give way, and "down comes the cradle and babies and all," and great is the destruction and loss of infantile life. La Vaillant, the French ornithologist, assures us that he has counted as many as a hun-

dred and twenty inhabited cells under the same general roof. Another naturalist mentions as many as eight hundred, and even a thousand. The nests are so securely built and cemented with the saliva from the birds' beak, that the Malays have a saying, "He who can remove a weaver's nest without breaking it will find a golden ball within." An English naturalist, anxious to examine one of these nests at leisure, ordered his attendants to bring the whole structure to his halting-place. They hacked and hewed, pulled and tore, but to no purpose; the building became one heap of ruined and immovable nests, matted, intertwined, and cemented with more secure masonry than a native hut. The structure is in some instances so large that it may be seen several miles off, and, as already remarked, has often been taken for a human dwelling by travelers.

Bits of clay are frequently found in the nests, which inventive but non-scientific Africans believe are the candelabra which hold the bodies of fire-beetles, used as Aladdin's lamps in the dark chambers of the wakeful weaver birds. The Sociable Grosbeak, without hygienic lectures, knows too well the value of sleep and the evil of night illuminations, to fall into such bad habits. Mr. Burgess thinks they are simply to strengthen the nest; Mr. Martin Duncan suggests ballast or weights to prevent the wind taking too great liberty with the lighter and airy ones; while other naturalists are bold enough to suggest that the clay is used as a whetstone to sharpen the beaks of the small inmates. In some nests several pieces are found, weighing together six ounces. No doubt further observations of assiduous naturalists will, in time, come to a more satisfactory conclusion as to the purpose for which the weaver uses his bits of clay.



The female of the Sociable Grosbeak lays three or four eggs, which are of a light-gray color, with brown mottling at the blunt end. The birds live chiefly on the seeds of plants and grasses, on rice kernels, the fruit of the *ficus Indica*, and the fig of the banyan tree. Though they are almost vegetarians, at times they indulge in a diet of fat, juicy insects, which they much relish.

These little creatures are "wise in their own generation," and rarely, if ever, suffer from indigestion, or any of the evils consequent to dyspepsia, even after an abundant meal. For no sooner is the repast finished, than they seek a quiet resting-place, and there doze and dream in the sunshine, without thought or concern for anything. Peace and stillness reign in the forest while the little feathered friends languidly recline and let digestion do her work. They are busy creatures, too, and most methodical in their occupations; after the mid-day rest they bestir themselves, and prepare for a bath, for no animal loves cleanliness more than a bird. There are few exceptions to this rule, though we think of the woodpecker as a gum-besmeared creature, and some of the birds which frequent the tree barks remind us of tar barrels and turpentine jars. If water is not available for a bath, then sand or dust will do, and whoever has watched the process of avian ablutions, will not doubt the blissful delight they take in them. The afternoon toilet is an elaborate one; after bathing, there is the shaking of feathers, the flapping of wings, the scratching with beak and claws, the re-arranging of plumage, which is quite a lengthy and important business. Some birds, which are specially fastidious, will take each quill separately, and rub it through the beak, leaving it unruffled and bright with exuded oil.

Afternoon tea is a beverage they

never indulge in, but they meet together to have a cool draught of water, which they take between spicy bits of gossip. This process, however, needs caution, great vigilance, and alertness, for there are enemies near at hand, ready at any opportune moment to pounce upon them and make a meal of them. So the cute little creatures go down in hordes, and settle in the thickly foliaged trees near the water, and chatter and gossip, and then, with one swift swirl, swoop down to the brink, get a draught, and up into the trees before the falcons and other enemies have time to know what has happened. In a few minutes, when the falcons have fallen into another doze, the weavers repeat this, and so on many times, until their thirst is quenched and their love of gossip satisfied.

Some of us were taught when in the nursery, "Birds in their little nests agree," but, sad to say, this adage has its exceptions, and even among the weavers. The Dloek of Africa is a clever and ingenious little bird of the weaver family, artistic in taste, an expert in weaving color and softness into its nest, making a picture of beauty and loveliness, using soft and tinted mosses, colored threads or grasses, working like a genius, with such energy and vivacity that one is charmed, until its evil propensities rise up and condemn it. It is a real little spitfire, and while a pair of these Dloeks are busy building the nest, they will quarrel and scrimmage, every now and then leaving their work to have a fight, and they do fight in right royal fashion. If the wife is a shrew, the young bridegroom is a veritable rascal in his brutalities. It is one of his richest enjoyments to catch by stealth a brother by the tail, and suspend him in the air, while he screeches with pleasure. Then his companion, when free, turns round upon his tormentor

and pulls out his finest feathers, leaving him to go back to his bride in torn and tattered garments. But there are few birds who find pleasure in so vicious and discordant pastimes as these.

They do nothing alone, these sociable weavers, and hate solitude and inertness. When there is no architectural business on hand, and the family is fledged, they pay neighborly visits, hold choral festivals, congregate together in the woods, where they sing like a myriad of *prima donnas*, filling the air with melody. They are free to travel without trouble of baggage, journeying together in companies of thousands. Happy birds, travelling from one country to another, scanning the beauties of the earth, missing the annoyances of railway or steamboat or bicycle, needing but the flap of wings to carry them on through the sweet air whither they would go.

Many of these birds, especially the Fire Finches of Egypt and Nubia, love not only the company of other birds, but prefer to dwell near the habitations of man. Cornfields are their delight, a very land of Canaan is a ripe

*The Scottish Review.*

field of durrah, and a band of these beautiful fiery-red creatures lighting upon a field of grain may be a brilliant sight to the beholder, but is one of sore dismay to the farmer, who knows how much damage they do to his crops. They are bold and courageous little imps, and are not scared away by any simple device. It is indeed a wonder to behold a vast flock of these radiant little red-coats darting about in the air, like tongues of flame, glinting in the sunshine, opening and closing their wings to show off their beauty of color to the observers, whom they are well aware of pleasing. If the passer-by is appreciative, they will reward him with a burst of glorious song which he will not soon forget.

Such is the life of a weaver. Happy and free, though it, too, has its sorrows no doubt, and when the fatal shot lays its little mate dead at its feet, the sky is black and the world a wilderness. But only for one short day; again the sun shines, the sky is blue, and the little widow is joyful with another mate.

*S. E. Saville.*

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## WITHERED LAURELS.

(A Reverie among the Tombs.)

There is no stranger by-path in the history of Literature than that which leads through the burial-place of dead reputations. Here, under their dusty garlands, are carved the names of men who set the world astir for an hour, and have never moved any one since; to whom Fame in a moment of caprice flung wide the doors of her temple, only to thrust them out again, denying them sometimes so much as a niche in the porch. They laid them down exulting in the promise of undying re-

nown, and a generation or two later the curious wayfarer deciphers with difficulty the moss-grown inscription which is all that remains of their claims to eternal remembrance. As he ponders these dim records, he is touched by that whimsical pity which the obscure living feel for the obscure dead. Do they know over yonder how vain was their hope? Do they care? The dread of oblivion is one of the commonest and most unreasoning of human terrors.

And when I am forgotten, as I shall be  
And sleep in dull, cold marble where  
no mention  
Of me more must be heard of,—

the words drop hollow and heavy, like  
earth on a coffin. Perhaps it is well  
for those who fall asleep, their heads  
softly pillowed on a kindlier assur-  
ance.

There is room even within the limits  
of the Christian faith for a good many  
theories of a future life; but Condi-  
tional Immortality is undoubtedly the  
law of Literature. They live who de-  
serve to live. But when we proceed to  
enquire what constitutes desert, we  
get no very clear response; where Re-  
ligion speaks most certainly, the utter-  
ance of Literature is ambiguous and  
evasive. The candidates for literary  
immortality present themselves, in  
fact, for examination without being  
acquainted with the examiners' condi-  
tions; the lookers-on (under the im-  
pression that they occupy a much  
more important position) analyze their  
work, and decide confidently that this  
one or that has certainly qualified; and  
all the while an invisible, irresponsible  
Power, of us and yet beyond us, is  
gently but irresistibly correcting our  
estimates, reversing our verdicts, and  
proving to us how pitifully ignorant  
we are of the rules of the competition.

Consider, for example, the sad case of  
Du Bartas. His epic, "The Week, or  
the Creation of the World," was pub-  
lished in 1578; in six years it passed  
through thirty editions and was trans-  
lated into half a dozen languages,—an  
honor which has not been awarded to  
any masterpiece of French poetry.  
Tasso condescended to borrow from  
him, and so perhaps did Milton; De  
Thou reckoned him one of the most  
illustrious authors of the day; Ron-  
sard, on reading his first pages, is said  
to have cried, "O that I had written  
them!" In one edition he is described  
as the Prince of French poets. Gas-

con though he was, Du Bartas was in  
private life a very modest young man,  
but he gently corrects those who ac-  
cused him of having done nothing but  
turn the Bible into verse, in this way.  
"I have," he says, "not so much fol-  
lowed the text of the Bible, as tried,  
though without departing from the  
truth of the story, to imitate Homer in  
his *Iliad*, Virgil in his *Æneid*, and oth-  
ers who have left us works of similar  
material." What has become of Du  
Bartas and his thirty editions now?  
When that band of cheerful pilgrims,  
who called themselves the Cadets of  
Gascony, went wandering last sum-  
mer through the south of France,  
erecting tablets and busts wherever  
they could find the smallest excuse,  
they accorded Du Bartas the usual  
recognition; but the French newspa-  
pers had to remind their readers who  
he was. The portentous performance  
which delighted his own age is dead;  
no one but the writer of a manual of  
French literature will ever read it  
again, and perhaps we are overrating  
the perseverance of the manual-  
writer. What soul there was in it has  
transmigrated into Sylvester's deligh-  
tful translation. Goethe says severely  
that there are lines in "The Week"  
worthy of a place in every collection  
of French poetical models, and that we  
do very wrong to forget its author. We  
listen with respect, but we know in  
our hearts that Goethe, for once, is  
wrong, and that Dryden is right when  
he declares that Du Bartas

Impertinently and without delight,  
Described the Israelites' triumphant  
flight,  
And following Moses o'er the sandy  
plain  
Perished with Pharaoh in th' Arabian  
main.

One rose from Ronsard's garden has  
outlived his rival's whole creation. It  
is, of course, easy to dismiss the sub-  
ject by saying that Ronsard was a

poet and Du Bartas was not; what we really should like to know is, why the fact was not sooner discovered.

Those who hold that the characteristic of genius is to reach all hearts, and that what reaches all hearts must therefore be genius, may object that Du Bartas lived in the sixteenth century, and that we have had time since then to forget a great many persons and things deserving of a better fate. Let us turn then, to a modern instance, and recall the history of Mr. Martin Tupper and his "Proverbial Philosophy." This work went into its fiftieth edition; over two hundred thousand copies were sold in England and half a million in America. "The author of this book," wrote the American N. P. Willis, "will rank with the very first spirits of the British world; it will live as long as the English language;" and when he tried to select a few passages for quotation, the genial critic had to relinquish the attempt, because the work was "one solid, sparkling, priceless gem," and of course you cannot cut a gem into samples. The Daily News was content with a simpler assertion: "Mr. Mill, Mr. Herbert Spencer, Mr. Browning, Mr. Rossetti,—all these writers have a wider audience in America than in England. So too has Mr. Tupper." And The Spectator (never niggardly in its praise) declared that he had "won for himself the vacant throne waiting for him among the Immortals and . . . has been adopted by the suffrage of mankind, and the final decree of publishers, into the same rank with Wordsworth, Tennyson and Browning." How serenely the Immortals must have smiled! It is barely forty years since Charles Reade pronounced Adam Bede "the finest thing since Shakespeare;" and within the last fifteen years in the

Common-Room of a certain college in Cambridge the fact (which no one present dreamed of disputing) was gravely discussed, as a literary curiosity, that the great Twin Stars of English Literature should both have risen in Warwickshire! Alas,

Where is it now, the glory and the dream?

Among the innocent impostors who somehow contrived to win the hearts and confuse the judgment of their contemporaries until they have deluded a whole generation into believing them quite other than what they were, is Joanna Baillie. Scott and Miss Mitford were both extremely temperate and sagacious minds, but what are we to think when we find the latter gravely assuring the world that "Tragedy must now fly from her superb arena and take shelter in the pages of Shakespeare and the bosom of Miss Baillie;" while Scott describes the writer of the "Plays on the Passions" as sweeping her harp

Till Avon's swans, while rung the grove

With Montfort's hate and Basil's love,  
Awakening at the inspired strain,  
Deem'd their own Shakespeare lived again.

It is pitiful to contrast with these enthusiastic expressions a passage from an article in The London Magazine, written soon after Gray's death, in which the writer, after commenting admiringly upon the poet's erudition, suggests that some may enquire, "What signifies so much knowledge when it produces so little? Is it worth taking so much pains to leave no memorial but a few poems? But let it be considered that Mr. Gray was to others at least innocently employed, to himself beneficially." No one will consider this exaggerated praise for the "Elegy in a Country Churchyard."

<sup>1</sup> These passages are quoted from Mr. Tupper's Autobiography; he gives no dates, and we have not been able to verify them.

Sometimes, as we have seen, the candidate for immortality is congratulated too soon; others have won, if we may say so, by a fluke. Miss Mitford rested her hopes upon her tragedies, "Foscari," "Julian," "Charles I.," and "Rienzi;" we remember her by "Our Village." It would puzzle ninety-nine people out of a hundred to name the author of "Greenland," "The Pelican Island," and "The World Before the Flood," but it will be long before this hymn, *For ever with the Lord*, ceases to hold an honored place in our hymnals.

As nothing reveals to us the essential unity of our race, its solidarity, to use an ugly but expressive word, more powerfully than the knowledge that one man can speak to and for all in a voice undulled by time or space, so nothing gives us a more uneasy sense of the shifting, inconsequent nature of all things, including ourselves, than to observe the differences of taste which divide us even from our own grandfathers, to go no further back. When Walpole's "Castle of Otranto" was published, Gray wrote to him from Cambridge, "It made some of us cry a little, and all in general afraid to go to bed." The school-girl of to-day would not find anything to trouble her nerves in that "enormous helmet, a hundred times more large than any casque ever made for a human being, and shaded with a proportionable quantity of black feathers," which was plumped down so suddenly in the courtyard of the castle; nor even in the spectre which Manfred volunteered to follow "to the gulf of perdition," but which merely "marched, sedately but dejected," to a chamber at the end of the gallery. She would probably harbor a scornful sentiment towards the noble heroine who pauses at a critical moment to enquire of the "generous Unknown" who was rescuing her, "Is it fitting that I should accompany you alone into these per-

plexed retreats? Should we be found together, what would a censorious world think of my conduct?" And when the hero replies, "I respect your virtuous delicacy, but though my wishes are not guiltless of aspiring, know my soul is dedicated to Another," she will not be sorry that "a sudden noise prevented Theodore from proceeding."

Or turn the leaves of an old book of drawing-room airs and read aloud Bayley's once popular verses, *We met; 'twas in a crowd*:

We met, 'twas in a crowd, and I  
thought he would shun me,  
He came, I could not breathe, for his  
eye was upon me;  
He spoke, his words were cold, and his  
smile was unaltered,  
I knew how much he felt, for his deep-  
toned voice faltered.

The world may think me gay, for my  
feelings I smother,—  
O thou hast been the cause of this an-  
guish, my mother!

The song once drew tears from those  
who heard it; to-day it only provokes  
irreverent laughter.

The moral which attaches itself to these reflections is evident; it points directly to a cautious use of the superlative in criticism. Is the reviewer who five years ago was certain that "The Second Mrs. Tanqueray" was an epoch-making play, the finest drama of our time, still of the same mind? And the other reviewer (in *The Daily Chronicle*), who proclaimed "Brand" "the greatest world-poem of the century, next to 'Faust,'" and "in the same set with 'Agamemnon' and with 'Lear,' with the literature that we now instinctively regard as high and holy,"—has he never been sorry that he spoke? The sincere admirers of Mr. Stephen Phillips (among whom we humbly venture to rank ourselves) must have pondered in some astonish-



ment over the paragraph (in the same generous journal) which assured them that "Christ in Hades" "has the Sophoclean simplicity so full of subtle suggestion, and the Lucretian solemnity so full of sudden loveliness," and that "the result is Virgilian." The man who would wish to belittle Mr. Kipling's achievements in prose or verse is unworthy of the name of an Englishman, or a critic; but one cannot help wondering what had happened to that writer in Blackwood's Magazine to whom "The Recessional" seemed "to concentrate in itself the glowing patriotism of a Shakespeare, the solemn plety of a Milton, and the measured stateliness of a Dryden." We must, however, cross the Atlantic if we would learn what the really enthusiastic critic can do when he has a good piece of material to work upon. A Kansas City paper, reviewing a new novel by Colonel George W. Warder, written with the purpose of teaching "the horror of crime and suicide," describes it as "a unique masterpiece of *aurora borealis* with wrought rosettes of fascinating English." Whether this account is accurate or not we cannot judge, as unfortunately Colonel Warder's works are unknown to us; but compared with such appreciative words as these, even The Daily Chronicle's praise seems somewhat cold.

The quality which penetrates the changeful surface of life and produces a durable impression of horror, or pathos, or beauty, has never been very perfectly defined. Some say it is style, and others that it is the idea; one holds that it may be acquired, another that it is the free gift of the unequal Gods. Most of those who possessed it seem to have lighted on it haphazard, when they were seeking something else,—wealth, or distraction, or the good of their generation; and some have held it unconscious of their treasure. There is a stone in a Roman

graveyard on which is carved the line, *Here lies one whose name is writ in water*; we all know who lies beneath it. But we can see, for the process goes on daily under our eyes, what is the fate of those who have it not. They are sentenced to a slow and gentle extinction; they fade gradually out of the memory of man; the pedant or the expert recalls them to us on occasion, but they have no longer any place in the warm life of Humanity.

It is not for any one on this crowded earth to quarrel with this beneficent law. Like Balzac's *curé* who fell heir to his friend's library, we grieve for the dead but we would not resuscitate them,—no, not on any account. Now and then we deplore the loss of a name which we would not willingly have let die, but for the most part we acquiesce gratefully in the decision of the unseen judges. They, after all, are wiser than we; they know what they are doing, which is more than we can always say of ourselves; and if they could carry their interference a little further, —if, turning into the Abbey some morning, we were to discover that a considerable number of the largest and ugliest monuments had crumbled into dust at the touch of an invisible finger, should we not be as much pleased as surprised? In one of the Canary Islands, where space is extremely limited in the cemetery as elsewhere, you can only hire your grave for a year or so; for that period a man may lie in consecrated soil, but at the end of it he must turn out to make room for another, to find, no doubt, that he can sleep as well without the churchyard wall as within it. This is the kind of arrangement that is made for us; it certainly has its convenience.

There are few of us who do not sometimes realize the consoling nature of this doctrine. To the critic, for example, who is not quite confident of



his conclusions (if there be any such), there must be great repose in the reflection that what he thinks and says about the work of his contemporaries is not, after all, of vital importance. It may be as wicked, as Milton suggests, to kill a good book as to kill a man, but it is evidently much harder. The critic must do his best to direct his readers right, but he exerts himself rather in their interests than in those of the writer; for he knows that, so far as the latter is concerned, his mistakes will ultimately be overruled in a Higher Court. The only drawback is that life is short and the Higher Court cannot be hurried.

And the author who wrote a book because he had nothing better to do, or because he was forced by stress of circumstances to try that way of earning money, or because his friends told him they were sure he could, or they were sure he couldn't,—who never sees his name on a title-page without mentally apologizing to the world for having brought one more superfluous volume into it; and the publisher, his accomplice, who is often the guiltier of the two,—how could they sleep in their beds at night if it were not for the thought of that dim space where the books of the season,—the book of the season, too, sometimes!—are comfortably buried away out of our sight under plenty of earth? Otherwise they would lie awake and wonder how many people they have prevented from reading "*Paradise Lost*."

There are those also who are neither authors nor critics, who feel the need of some such source of strength and

consolation as the year draws to its close, and we sit down, as custom rules we should, to consider its literary gains and losses. We know beforehand the general character of the balance-sheet which will be presented to us by the various journals which save us the trouble of doing our own book-keeping. We shall learn that the usual amount of remarkable work has been produced, the usual number of new poets and novelists—or at least of writers who bid fair to become poets and novelists if they live long enough—has appeared; the yearly total of books has increased, and so have the sums paid to successful men of letters; and if any arithmetician were to draw up a comparative table of the number of authors to the square yard, our country would occupy a high place on the list. In some minds these statements create a sense of profound depression. Mediocre ourselves, we are yet inconsistent enough to crave for something more than mediocrity (however bulky) in Literature; but we are not so unreasonable as to suppose that a genius can be discovered regularly every spring and autumn as the publishing seasons come round, nor are we ignorant of the fact that every man would be a genius if he could. It is the indiscriminating shower of epithets that defects us; we are vexed when we see people engaged in attaching the wrong label to mediocrity, and in pressing us to accept it as something else because of its label. We can only recover our gaiety by reflecting how insecurely all our labels are tied.

Macmillan's Magazine.

#### CHARLOTTE BRONTË.

"You may try—but you can never imagine what it is to have a man's force of genius in you, and yet to suffer the slavery of being a girl." In these

words I find a key to Charlotte Brontë's life. They are not hers, but they hold the secret of her unhappiness. "George Elliot," who so wrote,

herself transcended these limits and escaped into the freedom of man's activities. Charlotte Brontë died in comparative youth, in what should naturally have been the outset of her career. Save for the presence of this impulse, "the thing that was born with" her, the conditions of her life—having regard to the time and place in which she lived—were not abnormal. She was at least as well endowed by fortune as hundreds and thousands of other women who have lived normal and cheerful lives; but she was forever beating her wings against the bars of her cage, and what wonder if she bruised them?

If there has been one result more marked than another that has come from the publication of the fresh evidence collected by Mr. Clement Shorter,<sup>1</sup> it is this. These letters, including those written in the fullest freedom of privacy to her chief friend, Miss Ellen Nussey, and to the most congenial of her literary correspondents, Mr. W. S. Williams, show that neither her father, Patrick Brontë, nor her aunt, Miss Bramwell; nor her employers, Mrs. Sidgwick, Mrs. White and Mme. Héger; nor her husband, Mr. Nicholls, can be justly rendered responsible for the undoubted gloom which clouded her career. In fact, they go further than this. For it is impossible to read this new collection of Brontë correspondence without deciding that this gloom has been overstated, or at least over-emphasized, in Mrs. Gaskell's "Life." If Charlotte Brontë was deprived of any capacity to enjoy the fruits of her hard-earned success, if her spirit was robbed of its elasticity, and she herself rendered unable to mingle in social intercourse with her intellectual peers, the reason is to be found, not in the privations and

the drudgery of her early life, nor in the moroseness of her father, but in the domestic afflictions which overwhelmed her, and in particular the successive deaths of her sisters and co-workers, Emily and Anne.

I know that indignant protests against what she regarded as injustice on the part of her employers, and earnest appeals for a wider social outlook, are contained in her letters. Nor do I suggest that the feelings to which she thus gave expression were not genuine. But there is another side to the shield, and this side is, happily, revealed by the more intimate letters which have now been placed before us.

Charlotte Brontë's conflicts with her employers have been made the ground for the belief that she was universally unhappy and ill-treated as a governess. But the significance of these conflicts is largely modified when we remember her disagreement about Anne with Miss Wooler, with whom she remained on the highest terms of affection and regard to the end of her life, and when we read the account of the affair which she writes to Miss Ellen Nussey:

Anne continued wretchedly ill. . . Miss Wooler thought me a fool, and by way of proving her opinion, treated me with marked coldness. We came to a little *éclaircissement* one evening. I told her one or two rather plain truths, which set her a-crying; and the next day, unknown to me, she wrote papa, telling him that I had reproached her bitterly, taking her severely to task, etc. Papa sent for us the day after he had received her letter. Meantime I had formed a firm resolution to quit Miss Wooler and her concerns for ever; but just before I went away she took me to her room, and, giving way to her feelings, which in general she restrains far too rigidly, gave me to understand that in spite of her cold, repulsive manner, she had a considerable regard for me, and would be very sorry to part with me. If anybody likes me, I cannot help liking them; and remem-

<sup>1</sup> Charlotte Brontë and Her Circle. (Hodder & Stoughton.)

bering that she had in general been very kind to me, I gave in and said I would come back if she wished me. So we are settled again for the present, but I am not satisfied. I should have respected her far more if she had turned me out of doors, instead of crying for two days and two nights together. I was in a regular passion; my "warm temper" quite got the better of me, of which I don't boast, for it was a weakness; nor am I ashamed of it, for I had reason to be angry.<sup>2</sup>

And the way she writes about Miss Wooler's proposal to hand over the Dewsbury Moor School to the Brontë girls is cool, to say the least of it:—

I am not going to Dewsbury Moor, as far as I can see at present. It was a decent, friendly proposal on Miss Wooler's part, and cancels all, or most of her little foibles, in my estimation; but Dewsbury Moor is a poisoned place to me; besides, I burn to go somewhere else. I think, Nell, I see a chance of getting to Brussels.<sup>3</sup>

Again, such a sentence as this, which occurs in a letter to Emily, written when Charlotte Brontë was at Mrs. Sidgwick's Stonegappe:

Don't show this letter to papa or aunt, only to Bramwell. They will think I am never satisfied wherever I am. I complain to you because it is a relief, and really, I have had some unexpected mortifications to put up with.<sup>4</sup>

—goes to show that there may have been faults on both sides. For who is there that has not had, under circumstances otherwise favorable, "some unexpected mortifications to put up with?"

Nor can we avoid noticing the mental attitude in which she receives Mr. White's proposal that her father

should come and stay at Upperwood House.

Mr. White has been writing an urgent invitation to papa, entreating him to come and spend a week here. I don't at all wish papa to come, it would be like incurring an obligation.<sup>5</sup>

Similarly the straitened circumstances of the Brontë household and the isolation of her Haworth life would seem to have been unduly stressed in Mrs. Gaskell's "Life." These conditions did exist; but against them we must place an opinion such as this, which contains Charlotte Brontë's own estimate of the disadvantages of her home life as compared with the greater affluence of others:—

There is much in Ruth's letter that I thought very melancholy. Poor girls! theirs, I fear, must be a very unhappy home. Yours and mine, with all disadvantages, all absences of luxury, wealth, and style, are, I doubt not, happier.<sup>6</sup>

And even the supreme incident of her attendance at the confessional of Ste. Gudule, which marks the nadir of her Brussels experience, must be taken in conjunction with the verdict of her calmer moments:

Whenever I turn back to compare what I am with what I was, my place here with my place at Mrs. Sidgwick's or Mrs. White's, I am thankful.

And such a passage as the following, which is taken from a letter to Bramwell—and there are many such vivacious passages scattered up and down this fresh correspondence—shows that in the year 1843 her spirit had not been robbed of its elasticity.

As for me, I am very well, and wag on as usual. I perceive, however, that I grow exceedingly misanthropic and

<sup>2</sup> Letter to Ellen Nussey, from Dewsbury Moor, Jan. 4, 1838.

<sup>3</sup> To E. N., from Upperwood House (Mrs. White's), Oct. 17, 1841.

<sup>4</sup> June 8, 1839.

<sup>5</sup> To E. N., May 4, 1841.

<sup>6</sup> To Ellen Nussey, Nov. 10, 1847.

sour. You will say that this is no news, and that you never knew me possessed of the contrary qualities—philanthropy, sugariness. *Das ist wahr* (which being translated means, that is true); but the fact is, the people here are no go whatsoever. Among one hundred and twenty persons which compose the daily population of this house, I can only discern one or two who deserve anything like regard. This is not owing to foolish fastidiousness on my part, but the absence of decent qualities on theirs. They have not intellect or politeness, or good-nature or good-feeling. They are nothing. They have no sensations themselves, and they excite none. But one wearies from day to day of caring nothing, fearing nothing, liking nothing, hating nothing, being nothing, doing nothing—yes, I teach and I sometimes get red in the face with impatience at their stupidity. But I don't think I ever scold, or fly into a passion. If I spoke warmly, as warmly as I sometimes used to do at Roe-Head, they would think me mad. Nobody ever gets into a passion here. Such a thing is not known. The phlegm that thickens their blood is too gluey to boil. They are very false in their relations with each other, but they rarely quarrel, and friendship is a folly they are unacquainted with. The black swan, M. Héger, is the only sole veritable exception to this rule (for Madame, always cool and always reasoning, is not quite an exception). But I rarely speak to Monsieur now, for not being a pupil, I have little or nothing to do with him. From time to time he shows his kindheartedness by loading me with books, so that I am still indebted to him for all the pleasure and amusement I have. Except for the total want of companionship, I have nothing to complain of. I have not much to do, sufficient liberty, and I am rarely interfered with. I lead an easeful, stagnant, silent life, for which, when I think of Mrs. Sidgwick, I ought to be very thankful.<sup>7</sup>

The picture she gives here of the Pensionnat Héger is vivid, merciless, true; but note the sentence, "I have not much to do, sufficient liberty, and I am rarely interfered with."

<sup>7</sup> To Bramwell, from Brussels, May 1, 1843.

And how does she describe M. Héger, this one, persistent friend?

He is professor of rhetoric, a man of power as to mind, but very choleric and irritable in temperament; a little black being, with a face that varies in expression. Sometimes he borrows the lineaments of an insane tom-cat, sometimes those of a delirious hyena; occasionally, but very seldom, he discards these perilous attractions and assumes an air not above one hundred degrees removed from mild and gentleman like.<sup>8</sup>

Whatever else the writer of these passages may have lacked at this time, she certainly did not lack spirit.

Indeed when she looks back upon her years of governess life she expresses herself with complete sanity. These letters provide us with a very practical test of what her real opinion on this subject was. She is asked to give advice in respect of two persons who are thinking of adopting the same career. To Miss Ellen Nussey, her dearest friend, she writes: "The effort will do you good; no one ever does regret a step towards self-help; it is so much gained in independence." And to Mr. W. S. Williams, with reference to his daughter Fanny, she says:—

It seems to me that your kind heart is pained by the thought of what your daughter may suffer if transplanted. . . . Suffer she probably will; but take both comfort and courage. . . . Hers will not be a barren suffering; she will gain by it largely; she will "sow in tears to reap in joy." A governess' experience is frequently, indeed, bitter, but its results are precious: the mind, feeling, temper, are all subjected to a discipline equally painful and priceless. I have known many who were unhappy as governesses, but not one who regretted having undergone the ordeal, and scarcely one whose character was not improved—at once strengthened and purified, fortified and softened, made more en-

<sup>8</sup> Written to Miss Wheelwright (date not given).

during for her own afflictions, more considerate for the afflictions of others, by passing through it.<sup>9</sup>

There is surely evidence here for the belief that Charlotte Brontë would have emerged from the unfavorable conditions of her early life, if it had not been for the overwhelming blow dealt her by the death of her sisters. Her work would have brought peace and satisfaction, and the fruit of her success would have provided her with the means of attaining that wider outlook on the world, of the need of which she was conscious, and which she desired earnestly for the perfecting of her art. It was the loss of Emily and Anne that destroyed her future. On April 2d, 1849, that is, after Emily's death, and two months before Anne was to follow her elder sister, Charlotte Brontë writes to Mr. Williams: "Oh, if Anne were well, if the void Death has left were a little closed up, if the dreary word *nevermore* would cease sounding in my ears, I think I could yet do something."

And when at length, after Anne's death, she went back to the MS. of "Shirley," the chapter which she first wrote she named "The Valley of the Shadow of Death." Well might she write "... the human heart *can* suffer. It can hold more tears than the ocean holds water. We never know how deep—how wide it is, till misery begins to unbind her clouds, and fill it with rushing blackness.

"Forget! The North Pole will rush to the South, and the headlands of Europe be locked into the bays of Australia, ere I forget."

In this time of affliction the sole consolation vouchsafed to her comes from her art. Writing to Mr. Williams, on July 3d, 1849, she says:—

Lonely as I am, how should I be if

Providence had never given me courage to adopt a career—perseverance to plead through two long, weary years with publishers till they admitted me? How should I be, with youth past, sisters lost, a resident in a moorland parish, where there is not a single educated family? In that case, I should have no world at all: the raven, weary of surveying the Deluge and without an ark to return to, would be my type. As it is, something like a hope and motive sustains me still.<sup>10</sup>

But when all necessary modifications in the picture presented by Mrs. Gaskell's "Life" have been made, the fact remains that Charlotte Brontë's life was a life of suffering and isolation. During her later years her success in the field of letters brought fitful gleams of a fuller and more joyous existence; but these gleams only served to reveal the sad truth that her capacity for this new life had gone, or to throw into stronger relief the dreary sameness of the life she shared with her stern and afflicted parent—"the dead silence of a village parsonage, in which the tick of the clock is heard all day long." And then the short year of happiness, and her career was closed by death.

When we read this story one thought arises with peculiar force in our minds, "How barely, with what difficulty and pain, did she emerge from obscurity?" She was like a plant in a dark vault, which, being quickened into life through some chance, sends out a shoot across the bare floor to the glimmer of light which shows through a crevice in the wall, and passing through that crevice, at length bursts into leaves in the glad light of day. The power of the poet was there, and this power it was that compelled her to extend her existence through all the long years of poverty, drudgery and bereavement, and eventually directed her to the little crevice through which her nature

<sup>9</sup> From Haworth, June 15, 1848.

<sup>10</sup> To W. S. Williams, from H., July 3, 1849.



could burst forth into creative energy—the reproduction with vivid effect of the actual circumstances of her own narrow and darkened life. “I love memory,” she writes in “Villette,” “I prize her as my best friend.” With her, the past was as vivid and real—more vivid, perhaps—than the present. This is the cause of her success. The special and peculiar power which marks Charlotte Brontë’s work in creative literature is due to this concentration of her genius upon a very narrow field of experience and observation. Here is to be found the compensation for the penury of her early years, the recompense for the isolation of the moorland village, and the gloom of the house that looked out only on the church and the graveyard. That the excellence of dramatic presentation, which distinguishes Charlotte Brontë’s novels, is to be referred to this source, scarcely needs demonstration. The facts of her life enable us to identify her characters and incidents almost without exception or omission. Taking her books as wholes, her schooldays and her experiences as a governess are reproduced in “Jane Eyre,” her life at Haworth in “Shirley,” and her life in Brussels, together with certain features of her visits to London, after her celebrity, in “Villette.” Probably no great novelist has drawn his (or her) characters so closely or so directly from the life. “George Elliot’s” method we know. She could not work freely, she has told us, until a certain interval of time separated her from the models and materials out of which she constructed her characters. Charlotte Brontë’s characters must often have been drawn while the images of her originals remained in her brain, and she could recall the actual words which they had spoken. In all cases, so much of the material as consisted of scenes in which she had herself played a part—the scenes at

the Cowan Bridge School, for example—is reproduced with a vividness which shows how deeply this experience burnt into her brain. The reason for the continuous and persistent use of personal experience I have already suggested to lie in her extreme isolation and her limited field of observation. The result is a remarkable, almost photographic, exactness of word-painting, producing the same vivid portrayal of actual life as we find in the almost parallel case of Olive Schreiner, the authoress of “The Story of an African Farm.”

Many facts appear in Charlotte Brontë’s biography which give a startling impression of the extent to which she “transcribed” from life. Before “Shirley” was published, the passage in which the Taylors of Gomersal were described as the “Yorkes” was sent to one of the sons. The proceeding elicited the characteristic reply that “she had not drawn them strong enough.” And when a copy of “Shirley” reached Mary Taylor, in New Zealand, she at once recalls the actual circumstance upon which the incident of Moore’s being nursed at Briarmains was based. In allusion to the “handsome foreigner” who was thrown upon their hospitality, she remarks, “By the way, you’ve put him in the servants’ bedroom.” Further on, in the same letter, she writes this significant sentence: “*There is a strange feeling in reading it, of hearing us all talking.*”<sup>11</sup> Of the poetic truth of the picture of West Riding life which the book gives, there can be no question. If proof were needed it would be found in the fact that the faithful delineation of local characteristics led to the discovery of the jealously preserved secret of the personality of “Currer Bell.” A Haworth man who was living at Liverpool read “Shirley” by

<sup>11</sup> Mary Taylor to C. B., from Wellington, N. Z., Aug. 13, 1850.



"Currer Bell." To his surprise, he found that he was reading about people and scenes already familiar to him. The book was written by a Haworth person, and there was only one Haworth person to write it—Miss Brontë, the Parson's daughter. Equally strong is the fact revealed by Mr. Shorter's book, that Charlotte Brontë was careful to make arrangements to prevent "Villette" from circulating in Brussels, from fear lest her portrayal of *Mdme. Héger* should injure the prospects of the establishment in the Rue d'Isabelle.

But there is internal evidence which is equally conclusive. The opening chapter of "Shirley," in which the "cunrates" are drawn, could never have been imagined. Still less the account of the "unique child," Paulina, in "Villette." The picture is too strange to have been produced by fiction—it is fact. No application of the idealizing process could have resulted in such a picture of child-life, so daring, so abnormal, and at the same time one which carries with it the unmistakable impress of reality.

This method of transcribing from life is not the method of the highest art. It indicates a poverty of materials and perhaps an insufficient value of the idealizing function of art. There is evidence in the letters to Mr. W. S. Williams that Charlotte Brontë was aware of her weakness in this respect, and intended to make good the deficiency. On August 14th, 1848, she writes:—

The first duty of an author is, I conceive, a faithful allegiance to Truth and Nature; his second, such a conscientious study of art as shall enable him to interpret eloquently and effectively the oracles delivered by those two great deities. The Bells are very sincere in their worship of Truth, and they hope to apply themselves to the consideration of Art, so as to attain one day the power of speaking the lan-

guage of conviction in the accents of persuasion; though they rather apprehend that whatever pains they take to modify and soften, an abrupt word or vehement tone will now and then occur to startle ears polite, whenever the subject shall chance to be such as have their spirits within them.

Previously she had told him that "the only glimpses of society I have ever had were obtained in my vocation of governess, and some of the most miserable moments I can recall were passed in drawing-rooms full of strange faces." And to Mr. J. Taylor (of Cornhill) she says, in reply to a criticism: "In delineating male character I labor under disadvantages; intuition and theory will not always adequately supply the place of observation and experience." The luminous passage which follows was written to Mr. Williams three months after the publication of "Jane Eyre."

Details, situations which I do not understand and cannot personally inspect, I would not for the world meddle with, lest I should make even a more ridiculous mess of the matter than Mrs. Trollope did in her "Factory Boy." Besides, not one feeling on any subject, public or private, will I ever affect that I do not really experience. Yet though I must limit my sympathies; though my observation cannot penetrate where the very deepest political and solid truths are to be learnt; though many doors of knowledge which are open for you are forever shut for me; though I must guess and calculate, and grope my way in the dark, and come to uncertain conclusions unaided and alone, where such writers as Dickens and Thackeray, having access to the shrine and image of Truth, have only to go into the temple, lift the veil a moment, and come out and say what they have seen—yet, with every disadvantage, I mean still, in my own contracted way, to do my best. Imperfect my best will be, and poor, as compared with the works of the true masters—of that greatest modern master, Thackeray, in especial (for it is him I at heart reverence with

all my strength)—it will be trifling, but I trust not affected or counterfeited.

In distinguishing the influences which affected Charlotte Brontë's work, her knowledge of French literature and the teaching she received from M. Héger should not be omitted. As Matthew Arnold remarks, French authors, though inferior in poetry, are superior in prose to English. Now, when Charlotte Brontë was at Brussels, as we know from the specimens of her *devoirs* which have been preserved, she acquired a complete command of literary French. The exercise of composing in a medium so flexible and elegant as the French language, undoubtedly strengthened her power of expression in English, and contributed to the brilliancy of her prose style. For this acquisition, which formed almost the sole direct furnishing of her mind for the profession of letters, she was indebted to the teaching of M. Héger, whom, apart from the presentation of him as "Paul Emanuel," we know to have been a kind friend, a skilful teacher, and a man of correct literary taste.

These, then, are the elements to which the distinctive character of Charlotte Brontë's work in creative literature can be traced: her knowledge of French literature, her deep and accumulated domestic afflictions, and, above all, the chronic isolation of her life—an isolation which drove her back upon her own consciousness, and invested the memories of the past, and the thoughts which seethed in her brain, with a vividness almost equal to that of objective realities. Thus, making use, immediately and directly, of her own actual experience, she

told

With a master's accent her feigned  
Story of passionate life.

In order to form some idea of this "story" in its artistic form—some conception, that is, of the trend and purpose of her criticism of human life, as she saw life from the narrow windows of the moorland parsonage—we must turn from her biography and her correspondence to her novels.

For the revelation of her central thought, the characters of "Jane Eyre" and "Villette," are more significant than those of "Shirley." Jane Eyre and Lucy Snowe are portraits of herself. Rochester and Paul Emanuel embody what she conceived to be the most admirable and essential qualities in man—in man, that is, placed in the one relationship of life on which she chose to dwell so predominantly in her works. The full and complete sympathy between Jane and Rochester, between Lucy Snowe and Paul Emanuel, is her idea of the relationship which ought to exist between a man and woman about to enter into the marriage union. It is a matter of slow growth and of gradual and tentative advance. But the relationship finally achieved is a frank realization of the *égoïsme à deux*—a self-sufficient and self-contained republic, offering an unassailable front to the powers and dominions of the world. For her, as for the great woman who wrote "Aurora Leigh," the highest earthly good is to be found in the life of the affections. But her conception of the life of the affections is more absolute than that of Elizabeth Barrett Browning, and at once more restricted and more absolute than that of "George Eliot." With "Aurora Leigh" love finds a serious rival in her poet's art. With Maggie Tulliver, Dorothea Brooke, and Romola, love is an occasion for self-sacrifice. The greater the boon—and "George Eliot" does not deny its greatness—the more imperative is the duty of renunciation and the more painful

the process by which that renunciation is achieved.

Charlotte Brontë, therefore, represents the man and the woman as gradually overcoming the obstacles which separate them, material and spiritual; and when once united, as mutually and equally helpful and beneficial to each other. "George Elliot" shows that the matter is by no means so simple. The freedom of each individual is restrained by the chains of character and circumstance which bind him to society in general. In most cases these chains make at once the dual solitude and the mutual interchange of equal gifts impossible. Union resolves itself, therefore, into effort and sacrifice. Sometimes the nobler personality raises the feebler partner to its level; more often it surrenders its own freedom to share the bondage of the other.

Charlotte Brontë's view is ideal, romantic; "George Elliot's" is analytic and realistic. Which is the more true? the more in accordance with the facts of life? There can be no doubt as to which we would wish to believe in.

Moreover, the passion of love is exhibited by Charlotte Brontë in a form which gives it excessive and disproportionate value as a motive of human action, or rather as a factor in human life. It monopolizes her canvas and limits her portrayal of male characters to one type—the type of Rochester and Paul Emanuel. They are perfect in their way; they are, as Mr. Swinburne says, creations and not constructions; but they are creatures of the heart rather than of the brain. In a word, they are women's men.

It is this limitation of motive that is the most serious defect in Charlotte Brontë's presentation of the facts of life. And even her treatment of this sole motive is narrow, and itself limited by poverty of ideas and restricted social experience. Its free play is re-

strained solely by the idea of duty. So far she is in accord with "George Elliot." But Charlotte Brontë's idea of duty is conventional, and unvitalized by the new currents of thought. She takes no account of any of those fresh considerations which have been introduced by that earnest search for truth which is the "note" of Victorian thought and Victorian literature. The wider responsibilities, the deeper problems, which have come with the fuller and more exact knowledge of the age, are unknown to her characters. Her perception of duty as obedience to the revealed will of God is not obscured or embarrassed by any scientific visions of the responsibility of the parent for the child and of society for the individual. The belief in an existence after death explains once for all the presence of evil in a world created by an all-wise and all-powerful Being. "At the end of all," she says, "exists the Great Hope." Her protest against pain and evil is an appeal to faith. She does not participate in the movement of the waters—in the descent of new ideals upon society.

Just as her thought lacks the characteristic inspiration and insight of the scientific era, so, too, the framework of her dramas, the situations in which she places her characters, and the words and actions with which she furnishes them, are comparatively commonplace. She has neither the polyglot humanity of "George Elliot" nor the social clairvoyance of George Meredith.

But enough of disparagement and negation. The poverty of her mental furnishing, and the narrow range and unhappy circumstances of her social experience, while it limited, also concentrated her genius. What she has done she has done supremely well. Each phase of her life she has painted: the dumb rage and childish agony of the charity-school girl; the silent suf-

fering, the outward subservience, and the inward revolt of the dependent; the misery of a fine nature compelled to constant contact with the coarse speech and inferior brains of allens;—all this she has painted with the highest effect of dramatic presentation. More than this, she has indicated the boundless possibilities for joy which even the commonest relationship of life contain for the receptive soul, for the being that is sensible to the finer notes of the song of life. Her poetic justice, if it be blind, is at least complete. The human being which is susceptible of the deepest agony is also capable of the highest joy. And how exquisite is the enjoyment with which she rewards her sufferers. The self-abandonment of Jane Eyre:—

"Jane suits me," says Rochester, "do I suit her?"

"To the finest fibre of my nature, Sir."

The repose of Caroline, when the chill guardianship of Helstone is replaced by a mother's love, and "she forgot to wish for any other stay." The assured trust of Lucy Snowe, the friendless orphan heart, bare to every scourge, sensitive to every smart, of the pitiless world,—

He gathered me near his heart. I was full of faults, he took them and me all home.

It may be old-fashioned, it may be simple, but there is a value in this ideal teaching. There is a lesson still in this outcry of a passionate woman for love, affection, tenderness. In her own life these good things were denied to her. She asked for bread and a stone was given her. Isolation and bereavement filled her cup of sorrow to the brim. She lavished upon the creatures of her imagination all the fulness of tender affection with which nature had endowed her, but which circumstances had forbidden her to ex-

ercise. And when she had at length barely emerged from the cold shadow of adversity an inscrutable Providence summoned her hence.

Premature as was her death, and lamentable in view of the capacity for development which she had already shown, there is yet one aspect of her work achieved in which thought and language are equally matched: where the thought shows no shallowness, the language no peacock plumes to deck the commonplace, where no false note of sentiment jars. When she wanders alone, in her own fine phrase, "waiting duteously on 'Nature,'" Charlotte Brontë writes without flaw:—

Slow and grand the Day withdrew, passing in purple fire, and parting to the farewell of a wild, low chorus from the woodlands. Then Night entered, quiet as death: the wind fell, the birds ceased singing. Now every nest held happy mates, and hart and hind slumbered blissfully, safe in their lair.

The girl sat, her body still, her soul astir; occupied, however, rather in feeling than in thinking,—in wishing, than hoping,—in imagining than projecting. She felt the world, the sky, the night, boundlessly mighty. Of all things, herself seemed to herself the centre,—a small, forgotten atom of time, a spark of soul, emitted inadvertent from the great creative source, and now burning unmarked to waste in the heart of a black hollow. She asked, was she thus to burn out and perish, her living light doing no good, never seen, never heeded,—a star in an else starless firmament,—which nor shepherd, nor wanderer, nor sage, nor priest, tracked as a guide, or read as a prophecy? Could this be, she demanded, when the flame of her intelligence burned so vivid, when her life beat so true, and real, and potent; when something within her stirred, disquieted, and restlessly asserted a God-given strength, for which it insisted she should find exercise?<sup>12</sup>

Here, surely, we are looking straight into Charlotte Brontë's heart.

W. Basil Worsfold.

THE DIPLOMACY OF ELLIS MINOR.

It was a blazing summer afternoon, and Ellis minor was reclining beside his friend Urquhart, better known to fame as Bunny. There are unwritten laws at every public school, and at Wellborough no self-respecting "fellow" can watch a school cricket match without a rug, a cushion, or, in school language, a "kelsh," and one or more bags of fruit. It was at a period of the afternoon when the school was gorged and content, and was peacefully watching the Eleven piling up runs, that Ellis minor made a discovery. At such moments the intellect of the school was at its highest, and wags had been known to devise jokes that lasted for terms.

"I say, Bunny," Ellis minor remarked suddenly, "I believe Old Jimmy's mashed on your sister."

"If you don't want to be kicked, young Ellis," his companion replied, "you'd better leave my sister alone."

"Beastly sorry, old chap," Ellis minor said, "but I thought you'd like to know."

"Rot!" Bunny said shortly. "It isn't a bit funny."

"Well, just look at them," Ellis minor answered, sinking into a recumbent position, and searching in the bottom of the cherry bag.

After several minutes Bunny raised himself torpidly and contemplated his sister. Maude was, Bunny always thought, rather a responsibility. She occupied the position of governess to the head-master's children, and, to do justice to Wellborough, that fact in itself was no disgrace. Being a pretty girl, she even did Bunny credit in some ways, and at least one member of the Eleven was in love with her, but her presence about the place was disconcerting. It led to frequent invitations

to the head-master's and embarrassing acquaintanceships with other masters' wives. His friends sometimes avoided Bunny because his companionship dragged them into female society. Of course Bunny did his best to check the nuisance. That afternoon, for instance, he had merely nodded to her, and given her to understand that she must keep at a proper distance.

She was, at the moment when Bunny sighted her, conversing with the individual alluded to by Ellis minor as "Old Jimmy." As a matter of fact his age was about thirty, and his name was Arthur Baker. He enjoyed the doubtful privilege of teaching the Upper Fourth, in which form both Bunny and Ellis minor had been located for the last year. Three terms in the same form are not calculated to increase the mutual affection of masters and boys.

As Bunny watched them his brow clouded. The colloquy certainly appeared interesting, and Old Jimmy was apparently making himself both agreeable and amusing.

"What an ass he's making of himself!" Bunny remarked in disgust.

"He always does," Ellis minor agreed.

"I told her what a beast he was," Bunny continued.

"She doesn't seem to think so," the other observed.

"I don't suppose a girl could really fall in love with Jimmy," Bunny said.

"I don't know," his companion replied meditatively. "You see girls are such awful fools about men. They never really know what they're like. One of my sisters married an utter howler last holidays."

"But Jimmy's such a cad," Bunny objected, "and after the way he's



treated me, I do think she might be rude to him."

"Of course," he went on, after a pause, "I know she was bound to marry one of the masters. Old Beetle's governesses always do, but I do draw the line at Jimmy. I hoped she'd marry Turner."

Now Turner, though a double blue, was a shy and unfledged young man, and appealed more to the schoolboy than the female heart. Ellis minor thought her scarcely good enough for him, but tactfully refrained from saying so.

"Are you going to stop it?" he inquired.

"If it's necessary, I shall have a shot," Bunny said loftily.

"I should hurry up if I were you," Ellis minor suggested. "When they begin to look like that there's generally something on."

"She does look a bit rummy," Bunny admitted, as his sister turned a smiling glance at Old Jimmy.

"If she was my sister," Ellis minor continued, "I'd manage to make it jolly hot for him. You can make it rather nasty for a chap when he's in love with your sister. You ought to be able to get your promo this term if you run the thing properly."

"Get my promo?" inquired the less astute Bunny.

"Yes," his friend replied. "Every time he makes a cad of himself to you, you just go and rux her up about it. She won't mind badgering him a bit; if she's like my sisters she'll enjoy it. I only wish Old Jimmy was mashed on my sister. You might tell her what a beast he is to me, too."

"I've a jolly good mind to try," Bunny said. "It's not half a bad idea. Let's go and have an ice."

They strolled to the town together, while Ellis minor, with a wisdom beyond his years, and gathered from many sisters, explained the *modus*

*operandi* to the still doubtful Bunny.

Unconscious of their doom, the victims on the cricket-ground chatted on, and if Bunny could have heard their conversation, he might have been roused to even deeper indignation. As a matter of fact, his sister had been engaged to Old Jimmy for upwards of a week, and was at that moment discussing their future projects without a thought of Bunny or his ill-usage. Possibly, if she had been aware of his proposed interference, she also might have been somewhat apprehensive. For the present the engagement was necessarily a secret. Most of the Wellborough masters migrate in the fulness of time to become head-masters of other smaller schools, and at that same moment Mr. Baker was busy stalking the trustees of a grammar school with some success. If the engagement were announced before his election, he would be confronted with unpleasant parental questions as to ways and means, and to prophesy his election was scarcely diplomatic. Miss Urquhart was quite content with the arrangement. Every girl knows that an engagement is all the pleasanter before its announcement.

For a day or two Ellis minor's idea slumbered. He mooted it at intervals, but Bunny denominated it "too much sweat," and had scruples as to whether it was not "rather bad form." At the end of the week, however, his anger was roused to boiling point and his scruples scattered to the winds. Old Jimmy put him on *satisfecit*.

Now, being put on *satisfecit* is a disturbing process. At Wellborough no form master can cane a boy, but must deliver the victim over to the house-master for execution as a disinterested person. Sometimes, in cases of idleness, he is given one more chance. The culprit has for a certain period to furnish the house-master every evening with a paper signed by the form-mas-



ter, and containing the mystic word "*satisfecit*," which signifies that the culprit's work for the day had been adequate. On the first evening on which this is not forthcoming the execution occurs.

Bunny was much incensed. He had no more fear of a caning than the average healthy schoolboy, provided it was soon over and done with, but he objected strongly to having it hanging over his head. That is, of course, the beauty of the institution of *satisfecit* from the disciplinary point of view.

"I wouldn't stand it if I were you," Ellis minor observed sympathetically.

"I won't," Bunny said, with indignation. "I'll forbid Maude—I mean my sister—to speak to him."

"I wouldn't do that, Bunny," said the Machiavellian Ellis minor. "It's no good telling a girl not to do a thing. You go and lay it on thick about how much a wanging hurts and all that, and what beastly cheek it is for him to get you caned. If that doesn't fetch her, you just threaten to bring your guv'nor into it somehow, and that'll make her sit up. Girls do hate their guv'nors getting muddled up in things like this, and your guv'nor seems to be waxy enough for anything."

After some discussion they mapped out a plan of campaign, and that afternoon Bunny presented himself at the head-master's house for tea. He had been accorded a standing invitation there, an invitation of which it is needless to say he never took advantage. Special invitations were bad enough. After a while the head-master's wife tactfully left Bunny and his sister alone. She feared that a fourth-form boy, who bearded tea at the house unnecessarily, must be in some serious trouble.

"Maude," he observed, when she had departed, "I've come to speak to you."

"If you didn't try to eat muffins and

strawberries at the same time, you might do it more easily," his sister replied unfeelingly.

"Don't rot, Maude," Bunny said; "it's rather serious."

"Would five shillings be enough?" she inquired.

"It's not money," he said impressively; "I shall probably be caned."

"The wretched boy ate a hearty meal," his sister replied, without any proper display of emotion. "What have you been doing this time, Lionel?"

"I'm on *satisfecit*," he explained tragically.

"What a horrible crime!" she laughed. "What in the world is it?"

"It's that brute Jimmy," her brother burst out.

"Oh!" she said softly. If Ellis minor had been there, he would have noticed the blush. "Tell me about it."

Bunny told her about it, and about the nature of *satisfecit*, and the pangs of caning, and the enormities of Jimmy. It was a lengthy narrative, with artistic touches derived from Ellis minor, and Miss Urquhart listened with apparent interest. There was, however, a twinkle in her eyes which annoyed Bunny.

"And now," he concluded, "he's torturing me—slowly torturing me because I'm not clever."

"Bosh!" his sister said. "You're going to be caned because you're idle."

"Do you mean to say you don't pity me?" Bunny asked.

"Not in the least," she said placidly.

"I suppose you thoroughly deserve it."

"Very well," Bunny said decisively. "I'll write to the guv'nor about it and see what he says."

The twinkle disappeared from Miss Urquhart's eyes.

"Lionel," she said, with sudden apprehension, "if you do that, I'll never forgive you."

"Why shouldn't I?" he inquired stolidly. "He'll be down next day and make it jolly hot for Jimmy."

Mr. Urquhart senior would certainly have regarded the occasion as a suitable one for a visit to Wellborough. He had a theoretical horror of corporal punishment, and a passion for interfering with his son's school career. To Bunny's credit be it said that he had never hitherto appealed for parental intervention, nor at that moment had he any real intention of doing so, but the advice of Ellis minor was persuasively ingenious. The latter had, as one of the masters said, "a bright but criminal future before him."

"You don't want father to make another row, do you?" Maude inquired desperately.

"Don't I?" Bunny rejoined calmly; "I want him to make such a row as two masters and a boy of our day cannot carry. It'll just about pip Old Jimmy."

Miss Urquhart looked deeply distressed. Mr. Urquhart's prejudices when once aroused were difficult to overcome, and it was unlikely, if Bunny carried out his threat, that Mr. Baker would ever be accepted with equanimity as a son-in-law. Besides, the intervention of a vindictive parent at this juncture might diminish the lustre of Mr. Baker's testimonials and references.

"Please don't, Lionel—to please me," his sister said.

"Oh," Bunny replied, surveying her with disdain, "I see what it is. You're mashed on that cad of a man."

"Lionel!" she burst out reprovingly.

"Oh, I don't mind," he rejoined loftily. "Please yourself, I don't very much object. In fact, it's rather a good thing. You can choke him off now."

"What do you mean, you wretched boy?" she asked.

"Write him a note and tell him not

to. Oh, my tin hat! Won't he look bilious?"

"I won't," she answered indignantly.

"Very well," the graceless youth said, "it's that or the gov'nor."

Miss Urquhart pondered hesitatingly for a moment or two, while Bunny eyed her triumphantly with the air of a successful blackmailer.

Then she did what was the most foolish thing possible under the circumstances; she gave Bunny a full account of her engagement, and of the difficulties which he might create if he brought their father on the scene. "That," as Bunny subsequently explained to Ellis minor, "gave the whole show away." While fully agreeing with her estimate of the probable difficulties of such a situation, and even emphasizing them with some ingenuity, he stolidly declined to abandon his threat, and reiterated it with even more verisimilitude than before.

It took some while longer, but Bunny held the trumps, and an hour or two afterwards, after a conference with Ellis minor, he strolled with an air of easy nonchalance into Mr. Baker's room with a note in his pocket.

"Well, Urquhart?" the latter inquired, "come for your *satisfecit*?"

"Can I sit down?" Bunny replied carelessly.

"For the present you can," the master said, with a chuckle at his powers of repartee, "but I don't see why you should."

"I've come to talk to you for a few minutes, Mr. Baker," Bunny went on unabashed, "and I hoped it might be a friendly conversation."

"Did you?" Mr. Baker said in considerable astonishment. "Personally I should have had my doubts."

"You see," Bunny announced, "I've not come to speak to you exactly as a master. I've been talking to my sister this afternoon."

"Oh!" said the other, turning a little red.

"I told her," Bunny continued, "that I was thinking of writing to my father about your conduct to me lately. It's become jolly insufferable, I can tell you."

Mr. Baker was on the point of inflicting summary chastisement on the spot, but he managed to contain himself and to await further information.

"Of course," Bunny pursued, "she was naturally very much annoyed to hear that any one could treat her brother in such a way, and——"

"Did she say so?"

"No, she didn't exactly say so, but she looked as if she was. She's got a very expressive face, hasn't she, sir?"

"Urquhart," the master began wrathfully.

"Oh, all right, don't be shirty. If a fellow can't talk about his own sister, whose sister can he talk about, I should like to know? Well, though she was very much annoyed, she interceded for you, and said that if the matter was put before you in its proper light you might manage to behave yourself. I had some doubts myself, you know——"

"There are limits, Urquhart," the unfortunate man said angrily.

"That's just what I said to her," Bunny interrupted imperturbably. "She asked me to give you this note."

Mr. Baker read the note rapidly. It set out the absolute necessity of mollifying Bunny for the present, and the possibly unpleasant consequences of parental intervention.

"You young scoundrel!" he exclaimed, "I've a very good mind to knock you down."

Bunny only grinned.

"Do you think it manly, Urquhart," he asked, "to attempt to shelter yourself behind your sister? It's not manly, it's not honorable."

"It's jolly convenient," Bunny said.

Mr. Baker rose and paced up and down the room, while Bunny watched him with ill-concealed delight.

"I'm very much disappointed in you, Urquhart," he said at last, "very much. I had hoped you had turned over a new leaf. You've been working better lately, and I intended to take you off *satisfecit* at the end of the week, but I don't see how I can do it now. It's a most unpleasant position. Much as I should like to, I can't have you caned, because you're not idle enough to be caned; and I can't take you off *satisfecit*, because then you'd say that I was afraid of your complaints to your father."

Bunny looked a little shocked and surprised. He had not supposed that the situation would strike Old Jimmy quite in that light, but after a moment's reflection his equanimity returned. He concluded that this was Jimmy's tactful way of leading up to a surrender.

"Oh, of course, if you see now how hard I really work, it's quite easy," he said triumphantly. "You just chuck up the *satisfecit* business and we'll say no more about it."

"We'll say no more about it, won't we?" the master answered, eyeing him grimly.

"I certainly shan't," Bunny replied with apparent magnanimity. "In fact, I promised my sister to hush the thing up as far as I could."

"Your natural good feeling would of course compel you to do that, Urquhart?" Mr. Baker answered. There was a twitch about the corners of his mouth, which Bunny did not notice.

"Oh, I'm all right when I'm treated properly," the latter remarked.

"Very well, Urquhart," the master said, "I've decided what I am going to do—subject of course to your approval. I want a day or two to think this over. As a boy of the world you can't, I suppose, object to that. I'll

undertake to sign your *satisfecits* till Saturday, and then you can come and talk matters over again with me. Would that suit you?"

"I'd rather have the *satisfecit* taken off altogether at once," Bunny answered.

"Surely," Mr. Baker said, smilingly, "you can understand that there must be—shall we say?—a certain amount of fiction in a delicate affair like this. It wouldn't do—ah! I see, you follow me. You mustn't be too hard, even on a master, when he's down."

"All right," Bunny agreed unsuspiciously, in the flush of victory. "I shouldn't wonder if that wouldn't be the best way of getting out of it. I don't want to be harder on you than I can help, you know."

"Very good of you, I'm sure, Urquhart," the master replied. "Shall we say five o'clock on Saturday? Well, here's your *satisfecit* for to-day. I'm afraid we must end this interesting conversation now, or you'll be late for tea."

Bunny would have been a little surprised at Jimmy's behavior after his departure. In his mind's eye he conjured up a picture of his victim in a state of limp mortification at his defeat—a picture which he drew in lurid colors for the amusement of the delighted Ellis minor. As a matter of fact, the victim sat back in his arm-chair and rippled with silent laughter. He was aware, but Bunny was not, of one important circumstance. On the following Friday the election was to be made to the head-mastership for which Mr. Baker was a candidate.

For the rest of the week Bunny revelled in the sweets of victory. After a fortnight of *satisfecit*, a period of absolute and entire idleness came to him with an added pleasure, and he made use of his opportunity to the uttermost. To go into form in a state of complete ignorance, and without the slightest

feeling of apprehension as to the consequences, was a sensation which struck him as particularly suitable to the end of the summer term. Ellis minor, as the contriver of his happiness, he rewarded with gratitude and ices, and the two conspirators exchanged smiles of delight when Jimmy nursed Bunny carefully through the difficulties of translation, or suggested the answers to even the easiest of questions. Those glances of satisfaction were, it may be added, not entirely thrown away on Mr. Baker. The only regret which Bunny felt was that Ellis minor could not be present to see him exact his *satisfecit* every evening with an easy air of contemptuous triumph.

Friday night came, and with it came a telegram to Mr. Baker. It announced his election to the head-mastership, and Bunny, as he peacefully penned a story, or chatted with Ellis minor over the prospect of "jumping a bit more on Old Jimmy to-morrow afternoon," was unconscious that one of his form-master's first remarks to himself on hearing of his election was, "I must not forget to buy it to-morrow morning." Next to his satisfaction at imparting the news to Miss Urquhart herself, he looked forward to the joy of breaking them to her brother.

"Well, Urquhart," he began genially, as his tormentor strolled in on Saturday, "come to have another chat with me about our difficulties, eh?"

"Yes, Mr. Baker," the small boy answered languidly; "I came to hear what you thought of doing."

"I notice," Mr. Baker said, with the same geniality, "that you don't trouble to call me 'sir,' but, of course, now you're not speaking to me as a master."

"No," Bunny said, "I think it's better to drop all that kind of rot."

"I fully agree with you, Urquhart, fully," the master answered. "I am quite ready to talk with you as man to

man, eh? That's to be the arrangement, isn't it?"

"Yes," Bunny said loftily. "It's always better to talk to a fellow as if he wasn't a servant, you know."

"And what do you expect me to do, Urquhart?" Jimmy asked.

"I suppose," Bunny suggested, "you'll drop the *satisfecits* altogether now. They seem to me scarcely necessary."

"Do they?" Mr. Baker replied, with a marked change of manner. "I don't agree with you, and what I am going to do is to give you the soundest thrashing you ever had in your life."

Bunny started as if he had been shot.

"I said," Mr. Baker said menacingly, "that I was going to give you the soundest thrashing you ever had in your life. Did you hear me?"

"You can't; you've no right to," Bunny stammered.

"I have no right as a master, Mr. Urquhart, but as man to man—as man to boy."

Bunny began to turn pale.

"Under the circumstances, Mr. Urquhart, you can fight if you choose, you know, but I shouldn't advise you to. I think, perhaps, it wouldn't hurt quite so much if you took it in the usual position."

"I'll take jolly care that Maude will never speak to you again," Bunny burst out desperately.

"I am inclined to doubt that, Mr. Urquhart," the master said. "I discussed the question of this little operation with her to-day, and she particularly asked me to add a few of the very best as her contribution."

Bunny winced, and made one last attempt.

"I want to appeal to the head-master," a right which is generally a prerogative of the Wellborough boy.

"Not the least use, my dear Mr. Urquhart, not the least. I have al-

ready discussed this with him, and he agrees with me that it is entirely a matter to be settled between ourselves. I think we might as well get to business now."

He went over to his cupboard and produced a cane of the lithe springy kind which Bunny was aware by experience produced the most salutary results.

"A good one, isn't it?" Mr. Baker said gleefully, as he made it whistle through the air. "I bought it specially for you to-day. I was a little divided between this and a thicker one. Your sister preferred the thicker one, but I told her it's possible to do better work with one of these."

"My father—" Bunny burst out.

"You can tell your father, mother, aunts, and nurse afterwards, Mr. Urquhart—afterwards. I should be obliged if you would kindly kneel over that chair."

Bunny sheepishly rose and knelt on the place of execution. The cane whistled through the air as Mr. Baker made a few preliminary passes, and Bunny waited for the blow. A minute passed, then another, and no blow came. There was a silent pause for the space of some five minutes, and then Bunny looked round to see what had happened. What met his eyes was Mr. Baker standing in fits of silent laughter, with his hands in his pockets and the cane gone from view.

"Who's got the laugh on his side now, Mr. Urquhart?" Old Jimmy inquired. "What do you think as man to man?"

"Aren't you going to cane me then?" Bunny asked, with a gasp of astonishment.

"Much as you deserve it, I am not," Mr. Baker said. "You see, in a month or two you'll probably be my brother-in-law, and it would scarcely do to step into the family over your semi-recumbent form."

Bunny stood looking shamefacedly at him, and the tears began to gather for the first time in his eyes.

"Urquhart," the master asked, "do you think you behaved exactly nicely to your sister—not to mention me?"

Bunny's emotions under the reaction began to grow almost too much for him.

"There, there, Urquhart," Jimmy said in a more kindly tone, "let's say no more about it—except this. I may be wrong, but from one or two things I've noticed I don't think you're entirely responsible for what you've done; and if you would kindly punch the head of the *fons et origo mali*, it might give satisfaction to both of us. Now let's

have some tea. I believe I made some other purchases this morning."

When Bunny emerged from the room an hour or so afterwards, his opinion of Jimmy was entirely changed. He summed him up as a jolly good sort, and was ready to receive him as a man and brother-in-law, and this, though he was on *satisfecit* of a real kind.

There were only two persons who really regretted such an end to the episode. One was Ellis minor, whose head was severely and ungratefully punched. The other was Miss Urquhart, who maintained that Bunny ought to have been thoroughly and mercilessly flayed.

*Henry Martley.*

Cornhill Magazine.

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### THE EARTH-LOVER.

O ultimate fingers of oblivion,

Press heavily at the last upon my eyes.

For they have loved so well the light of the sun,

Flowing waters and flashing skies,

That though the turf weave thick its green and dew,

Vision insatiate shall pierce it through.

O sweet dust, passionless and prodigal,

Fill up my sounding tympan with your peace,

For they went mad so long ago with the call,

Weary and fierce, of the shaken seas,

That one wild plover's note through the deaf sod

Would cry my soul awake from dreams of God!

Constrain me close, O Earth, in thy dim house,

Draw bolts on sight and sound, make strong all bars;

For oh, when April days with the world carouse,

Drunk with sunlight and dumb with stars,

Should once the south-west wind blow past death's door,

My sapless heart would leap and live once more!

*Ada Smith.*



## DUMAS REDIVIVUS.

It is not often that one witnesses a return to ancient faith such as has been seen in London in the case of the dramas of the elder Dumas. Something like a competition has arisen among theatrical managers, as to which shall be first in the field with works, the youngest of which is nearly half a century old. What makes the movement more strange is that the pieces now recalled in hot haste to our stage were familiar enough thereon a generation or more ago. Not at all an unhealthy sign is it when "*Mademoiselle de Belle-Isle*" and "*Un Mariage sous Louis Quinze*" are mounted, as they have been, at our principal houses of comedy. Plays such as these have been rare in all times, and the return to a taste for them must be regarded as a reaction against the commonplace, to the influence of which our stage has long been subject, and the sordid, with an avalanche of which we have been menaced. A chance, moreover, by which those of our actors who are capable of being taught might have profited, was offered of learning how to wear seventeenth or eighteenth century costumes. That little in this direction has been accomplished, is due to the practice, on the part of too many of our comedians, of regarding a part, not as a thing to be fathomed and interpreted, but as a vehicle for strutting and declamation, and for showing off advantages of face or form. So ignorant, meanwhile, is our stage-frequenting public that it extends to posing and rant a reception it denies to the highest art. It was in a piece of Dumas' that I heard fierce acclamation awarded an actor who, returning from a duel it is his chief object to keep secret, bounded into a drawing-room containing ladies with his drawn

sword in his hand, as though he were on the point of running them through the ribs, after the fashion in which he had just treated his antagonist.

The reaction against the problem play, and in favor of romanticism, reaches its climax when half a dozen versions of Dumas' "*Trois Mousquetaires*," or rather of his own and Maquet's dramatic rendering "*La Jeunesse des Mousquetaires*," are set before the public at the same time. There is, of course, scarcely a boy with a taste for adventure and access to books who has not read "*The Three Musketeers*," or, if there be such a boy, I am sorry for him. While constituting the most uninspiring of romances, however, the adventures of D'Artagnan, Athos, Porthos, and Aramis have not achieved on the stage success at all proportionate to that which attended them in book form. The reason is simple. What is best and most graphically related concerning them, is incapable of theatrical exposition. Nowise disposed to neglect or disparage his own work was Dumas. Yet he, even, when he converted "*Les Trois Mousquetaires*" into "*La Jeunesse des Mousquetaires*," was obliged to leave out the most picturesque and salient episodes. Thus emasculated and abridged, the play which was produced on February 17, 1849, by Dumas, at the *Théâtre Historique*, of which he was then the manager, obtained no very transcendent success. The same may be said of the first English translation, which was the work of Westland Marston, and given by Charles Dillon at the Lyceum on October 16, 1856. Content with these experiments, managers have allowed "*Les Trois Mousquetaires*" to sleep. Whether a greater triumph

than has hitherto been known will attend "The Three Musketeers" of Mr. Hamilton at the Globe, or "The Musketeers" of Mr. Sydney Grundy at Her Majesty's, I want to see. Upon other versions produced at suburban or country theatres it is idle to speculate. These are intended only to serve a temporary purpose, and, that accomplished, are immediately and permanently forgotten.

There are few English playgoers or readers who have a suspicion that the characters introduced by Dumas into his great work are almost all historical, or that a great portion of the adventures in which the three, or rather four, heroes participate is taken from a work written at the close of the seventeenth century. That Louis XIII., Anne of Austria, Richelieu, Buckingham, and Felton belong to history is, of course, known to the traditional schoolboy. Some even may know D'Artagnan as an historical character, seeing that on his military position as captain-lieutenant (*sic*) of Musketeers he was charged by Louis XIV. with the arrest of Fouquet, Viscount of Melun and of Vaux, the famous superintendent of finance, whom he seized upon and imprisoned in the Château of Angers. The Comte de Tréville, the captain of the King's Mousquetaires, is also without difficulty accepted as a real personage. That Athos, Porthos, and Aramis, with their fantastical names, should have been no less real, is more difficult of belief. Such they were, however, and the descendants of two out of three are, or were recently, alive. Milady even, who plays so detestable a rôle in novel and play, seems to have been a well-known woman—though to which, if any, of the different names awarded her she was entitled, is a matter on which I am unable to speak.

Most of the information I supply is taken from a curious and little known

work entitled "*Mémoires de M. D'Artagnan, Capitaine-Lieutenant de la Première Compagnie des Mousquetaires du Roi, contenant quantité de Choses particulières et secrettes qui se sont passées sous le Règne de Louis le Grand.*" Cologne (chez Pierre Mar-  
teau, 1700-1702, 3 vols.). This work, all but unrecognized in England, but likely to be better known in future—a vigorous translation, the earliest yet attempted, by Mr. Ralph Nevill, of the first of its three volumes having just seen the light—seems to be true in the main. Its statements are, however, untrustworthy, its author, Courtilz de Sandras, being given to mixing romance with history. Sandras claims to have come into the possession of the papers of D'Artagnan after the death of that worthy, and declares that he has added nothing to them but the connection (*liaison*) which the original does not possess. Much that he says concerning D'Artagnan is demonstrably true, such as his three visits to England. The first of these D'Artagnan undertook in 1643, when he went over in attendance on the Comte d'Harcourt, who was despatched on a mission to establish harmony between Charles I. and the Commons; the second, eleven years later, when he was bearer of a secret message from Cardinal Mazarin to Cromwell, and ran a risk of losing his life; and the third, in 1660, when he bore the congratulations of Louis XIV. to Charles II. on his restoration to the throne. These portions of the narrative are unmistakably genuine. D'Artagnan makes some shrewd comments upon English character which show remarkable powers of observation. He has, it may incidentally be said, a reference to hackney-coaches, which may pass as the first mention of this now familiar and uncomfortable vehicle, under that precise name, in literature.

One or two other points connected

with England seem worthy of note. D'Artagnan gives thus a fairly vivid picture of Charles II. in his exile in Paris, and speaks of him, after the battle of Worcester, as having so few friends, or being so badly followed (*si mal accompagné*), that he had incredible difficulty in securing his escape. To impute disloyalty to the followers of Charles is exactly the kind of error that a foreigner, judging by results, would be likely to make. So impressed is he throughout with the attitude of the Englishmen towards their King, that his breath is taken away. He observes that all Englishmen of any position (*tout ce qu'il y a d'honnêtes gens*) frequent taverns, and he expresses his strong distaste for this form of occupation. Very sensible are the remarks he makes or chronicles on things English. In one battle of our Civil War he took part on the side of the King. In this, whichever it may be, Charles I. won such a victory that, if he had marched his army direct to London, D'Artagnan finds every reason to believe that the city would have submitted to any terms he chose to impose. Fondreville, a Norman gentleman whom he accompanied, pointed this out to the King. Charles, however, D'Artagnan holds, was not only filled with timidity, but infatuated with the idea that the English must not be treated like other nations. He listened accordingly to the propositions with which the Parliament sought to amuse him, and the opportunity passed.

Turning to the incidents of which Dumas has made most use, we see that the great romancer has treated very cavalierly the narrative, such as it is, of Courtlitz de Sandras. Dumas presents D'Artagnan as assisting at the siege of La Rochelle, at a time when he could not have been five years old. At this period he is supposed to have been a full-blown Musqueteer,

though he did not join the company until a dozen years later. Of Felton and the Duke of Buckingham nothing is heard in the "Memoirs;" Buckingham having been assassinated in 1628, in D'Artagnan's sixth year, and Felton executed at the same date. Athos, Porthos, and Aramis are declared in the "Memoirs" to have been brothers, and all three Béarnais. Their *liaison* with D'Artagnan, and the readiness of the four to aid each other, are described by Sandras; but none of the incidents which attended the famous journey to the coast in pursuit of the missing diamonds of the queen occurred, or were possible. Very little is heard of Aramis, or, indeed, of Porthos; and the comic misfortunes of the former are generally narrated of Besmaux, a cadet in the Guards, mean, cowardly, arrogant, and time-serving, to whom some prominence is assigned, and who, at least, succeeded in feathering his nest. He it was who wore a baldric, the front of which was embroidered in gold, and carried a cloak to hide the back, which was less resplendent. On the other hand, Aramis, called upon to act as D'Artagnan's second in a duel with an Englishman, came, in spite of the protests of D'Artagnan, after having taken medicine, and was the victim of a calamity indescribable outside the pages of "Rabelais." Of Milady we hear much, and it is not wholly satisfactory to know that the infamous behavior of D'Artagnan in personating to her the Comte de Wardes proves to have been true.

To the list of those taking their property or their materials wherever they find it, must then, it seems, be added Dumas. I do not regard this as of the slightest importance. Unlike most of the greatest men who have been similarly charged, Dumas had no lack of invention. Auguste Maquet, with whom he frequently collaborated

claims to have supplied him with the most popular and romantic portion of his novels. His pretensions are not accepted in France. That Dumas at one time kept a species of workshop in which a large number of writers were employed, and by which books were turned out the share of Dumas in which is not recognizable, is known. The best work bears, however, the unmistakable impress of Dumas. Dumas' claim, accordingly, to the largest share of invention accorded any man of his times, or, indeed, of any time, will not be seriously disputed. Meanwhile, it is curious to observe how many of the greatest dramatists have been dependent upon others for their plots. The Greek tragedians confined themselves to the myths of their own country, and the entire drama is confined to the descendants of Pelops and his son Atreus, and the results of their acts of incest or cannibalism. Molière took whatever in other writers suited his purpose, and our English Restoration dramatists treated him in like

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fashion. Shakespeare, the greatest of all, originated few of his own plots, and there is very little story in him the source of which cannot be traced. In the just published "Gypsy Folk Tales" of Mr. Francis Hindes Groome, there is a suggestion, with which I will not deal, that some of his plots, that, for instance, of "Cymbeline," supposed to be derived from a novel of Boccaccio, were, in fact, derived from legends told by the gipsy storytellers, to whom he listened while visiting their encampments in the forest of Arden or on the banks of Avon. In order to recognize the genius of Dumas, one has only to note the use he has made of what he has borrowed. A very readable book is the "Memoirs of D'Artagnan." Compared with the "Three Mousquetaires" it has as much claim to consideration as have, beside the masterpieces of Shakespeare, the earlier plays from which they were taken.

*Sylvanus Urban.*

<sup>1</sup> Hurst & Blackett.

## THE RUSSIAN WAR-CHEST.

From time to time England is moved to a general revival of interest in Russian finance. These occasions are never brought on by financial considerations alone, but strictly coincide with some new intrusion of the war-spectre. In quiet times, neither bankers, nor brokers, nor bondholders, nor other suspicious folk seem to be at all concerned with the stability of Russian credit, or ever disturbed by the mysteries of the Russian Treasury. But at the first approach of a "Penjdeh incident," the appearance of resolute Muscovite hostility in China, or any similar portent, political specula-

tion, even more quickly than financial timidity, turns to the condition of money matters in the Russian Empire. "We've got the money, too," that stirring line in the deathless Jingo song, might have been no expression of doubt that Russia was as fortunate, but what it might not have been it was; the expression of a general and in every way popular doubt, for which we may perhaps find a date in the letters and speeches of Richard Cobden. When that peaceable, and yet half imperialist, statesman said that, in a conflict with England, Russia would be crumpled up like a sheet of paper, he

was thinking not of her destruction by naval and military measures, but through financial collapse; a meaning which puts his simile exactly right. It pleased, for we were immensely proud in those days of our cash resources and all the other virtues celebrated by Dr. Smiles; and ever since then any association of the words England, Russia, war, has brought up to sanguine minds the image of a colossal band-box full of I. O. U.'s.

Now we see that a sort of peace-appeal from St. Petersburg has much the same effect in this way as a menace of war. No sooner does the Czar issue an encyclical in favor of suspending armaments for a few years, than its meaning is brought to the test of Russian finance. Nor is it wrong to do so, or "cynical," or unworthy, or any of the other stupid things that have been said of doing what ought to be done as a matter of course. Suspending armaments is not as simple an affair as reverting to plain dinners at seven o'clock. When rivalry—we need not speak of enmity—proposes mutual suspension of effort for a little while, it is desirable to try the grounds of the suggestion by every applicable test, and to do so with the rigor and impartiality of chemical investigation. That is what would be done in business, and should be done in politics. The facts being found, choice of action still remains. You may consider and disregard the facts, or act on them in part—do what you will, in short, within your limit of capability; but not till you have put them plainly before your eyes, with all the probabilities rooted in them. Therefore they are not merely innocent, but dutifully careful, who try the Czar's rescript by every explanation that is likely to fit. The financial explanation naturally comes first; and whether it be applicable or not, or in whatever degree it may be applicable, there is more cogency in

considering the financial state of Russia as related to a disarmament scheme—which is an evident matter of choice—than in doing so in contemplation of hostilities beyond our power to determine.

Investors and traders (usually the best judges) being sufficiently agreed of the soundness of Russian finance in the general, our concern is at all times, as to that matter, with the Russian war-chest; and, as we have said, the common unvarying impression in England is that there is very little in it. When the war-cloud hovers over that land and any other, discovery is not far off that Russia must certainly avoid hostilities for some time to come, for reasons best known at the Exchequer. Her new system of artillery remains incomplete from its enormous cost; or the new rifle equipment, though also incomplete, has drained the Treasury; or there is a famine so widespread as to draw to itself irresistibly every available rouble from every available source. Or should war seem really imminent (and it came very near indeed after the fighting at Penjdeh), then the calculation is that at any rate it cannot last long, because of the really "rotten" state of Russian finance. And just as this same embarrassment is supposed to explain the peace encyclical, so also it explains (for us) the Russian alliance with France: an alliance which, at first declared to be absurdly impossible for political reasons, was afterwards thought to be accounted for by a picaresque design on French savings at a time of great need. Both explanations, however, were forced, and even rather hysterical; and the truth is, we suppose, that little is known of Russia's money affairs except to a few gentlemen in the same constellation with M. de Witte. The greater financiers of the professional class may know much, and probably do; but if



so, it is a knowledge ranking with trade secrets, and therefore to be kept to themselves. Yet we will venture the opinion that few men are more impressed with the actual and potential wealth of Russia, or the Russian State, than some who have had most reason to look into its resources. The immense expenditure of these later years (the *estimated* cost of the Siberian railway was about £35,000,000 sterling) may have hatched out some misgivings, though not as to ultimate results; for the immense expenditure has been accompanied by enormous development of potential ways and means. Latent resources, however, no matter how considerable they may be, are of small avail in case of great and sudden demands: such demands as war makes nowadays, when campaigns that cost scores of millions are practically over in a few weeks. To be sure, Russia is a country that can stand out against conquest longer than any other, unless it be the United States. But the conditions have changed for Russia also in that respect; so that none can boast any longer of what has been our own great stand-by in war—latent resource. But see how that works out. Two great nations are suddenly at war. The one has a far greater amount of available wealth than the other, and time being allowed, could wear its foe out, and wear it down almost certainly; but has never thoroughly prepared a quick succession of heavy blows. Its antagonist, a poorer country, may have spent its whole resource and borrowed more for the purpose of organizing and completing a careful system of attack—a system of roads, and mines, and wires, actual and metaphorical—such as must ensure a first sweeping success. Consider what a first sweeping success means in these days, and then say which of the two nations is the likelier to be bankrupt (by indem-

nity and what not) six months afterwards.

Which of these two parts is and has long been played by Russia, and which till quite the other day by England, we know. With precisely how much skill, with how much freedom from the failure that corruption and incompetence provide, we do not know. And there still remains the question whether the impecuniosity of the Russian Government is all that it is supposed to be. It is reasonable to doubt it. There may be something in the suggestion that a Government so Eastern in its traditions and character, so unceasingly careful and assiduous in its military preparations, and with a more secret command of money than any other State in the northern hemisphere, is unlikely not to have an adequate war-treasury. If but of moderate dimensions, why not a hoard for fighting purposes, according to the use and wont of such Governments? The question may be answered by another: "Why, in that case, go out into the streets to borrow for army charges?" But where such treasuries are formed they are meant for their own sacred purpose alone; and it does not follow that Governments are poor because they borrow. Governments are great owners or trustees of property some times. There is no such independent owner or trustee on the face of the earth as the Czar; and with no lack of means at command it may profit his country to borrow vast sums in order to enlarge, to exploit, to secure the estate; and that is what the Russian Governments seem to have been doing. There are even political advantages in such borrowing. When an individual person borrows, he puts himself very much into the hands of his creditor. When a strong nation borrows of other nations the case is altered; the creditor is more or less in the hands of the debtor. The Russian loans were



largely held in England for a long time: no foreign stock was so much favored by the last generation of bankers. Much of this stock was sold in the sixties and seventies with a sense of political relief. Most of it passed into German hands. Germany was loaded with Russian stock in Bismarck's time—not to his political advantage; for the consequences of suspended payment (which would have been terrible in the financial and commercial conditions then existing at Berlin) were actually hinted from St. Petersburg on some appropriate occasion of disagreement. The desire of

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the Russian Government seems to be to make the whole world its banker; and it may be a mistake to suppose that this is all from need, and not at all from financial policy and statecraft. Of the two, the second is the safer hypothesis; and though there is every reason to believe that, notwithstanding her enormous army and her fast-growing navy, Russia is bent upon conquest by management and not by war (unless as a finishing stroke), it would be most unsafe to reckon at any time on the lack of means in that country as a safeguard against war.

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#### THE TURNING-POINTS OF TIME.

Every one has noticed that in life events of importance have a prejudice in favor of certain fixed times for their happening. 'Tis in spring and early summer that the youthful heart turns most commonly to thoughts of love. The vast majority of mankind is ushered into this world by candlelight already waning before the growing gray of early dawn. So, too, in individual lives one day in the week, a certain date, or a particular time of day has a special importance, due to its trick of appropriating to itself the memorable events of one's existence. Cromwell's 3d of September—which, by the way, was not his birthday—is a case in point, and how many a man and woman marks out Friday as a day of good or of evil things!

What is not so frequently noticed is, that what is true of the individual and of life is none the less true of nations and of history. The most striking fact about the study of dates is that the beginnings and the ends of the centuries—purely arbitrary points in the vast space of time though they be—

seem to have been especially big with fate for the destinies of nations. The annals of that great nation that has, at the close of the nineteenth century, loomed so large on the horizon of international politics, open with the discovery of San Salvador at the end of the fifteenth century; it was the voyage of Christopher Columbus at the expense of Spain in 1492 that in 1898 has cost Spain so dear, in the wresting from her, by the inhabitants of the continent he found, of her once great name as a colonial and naval power. It was at the end of a century that Britain finally signed away her last claim to sovereignty over those "Plantations in America" which she had shown herself so unworthy and so incapable to rule. It was in the last decade of a century that there sprung into being full fledged the Great Republic, which, at the close of another century, holds out a new "olive branch" to the old country, and bids fair to become the greatest power of the world.

The greatest colonial possession of

this country at the present time, Canada, was first settled in the first decade of the seventeenth century, and Quebec called into a humble beginning. At almost the same time—or possibly just one hundred years earlier—Britain's second greatest colony—the Australlas—was first seen by civilized man, whilst her vast subject empire in the East was at that moment for the first time occupying the thoughts of English merchants. The whole history of India, in fact—with the solitary exceptions of the Clive period and the Mutiny—is inseparably knit up with the beginnings and the endings of centuries. Vasco da Gama's discovery of the passage to India in 1497, the first European settlement by the Portuguese in 1502, the first arrival of the Dutch and the establishment of the United East India Company just a century later, the first commercial venture from England in 1591, the first charter to the first English East India Company ("The London") in 1600, the purchase of Calcutta in 1698, the granting of the charter to the New East India Company in 1708, the stirring and fateful events of the twenty years from the renewal of hostilities against Tippo in 1790 to the quelling of the mutiny of Seringapatam in 1809—embracing the acquittal of Warren Hastings, the capture of Seringapatam, the development of the system of "subsidiary alliances" by Mornington, the Mahratta wars of General Lake and Sir Arthur Wellesley, and the establishment of peaceful relations with the Sikhs, Cabul, and Persia by Elphinstone and Malcolm—is it not a complete summary of the history of India (with the exceptions mentioned) down to the closing years of the nineteenth century, which have been so noticeable for the plague, famine, currency difficulties, and frontier wars—events which are likely to exert a powerful influence on the

future history of the Indian Empire?

As with India, so, too, with Ireland—its landmarks have been where the new century and the old have met. The invasion by the Danes in 795, by John in 1210, and by Richard II. in 1394 and 1399; the first subjugation of the Irish Parliament to the English Council by Poynings in 1494; the revolt of the Earl of Tyrone and all its immediate consequences, including the seizure and settlement of Ulster by James I., the landing of William III., the Battle of the Boyne, the Treaty of Limerick, and, finally, the stirring doings of '98, and the union of the two Parliaments—they are all the happenings of "the 'nineties and the noughts;" and no doubt Gladstone's last great effort at the close of the present century may justly be reckoned another of the turning-points in Irish history.

It is unnecessary to detail instances of the same thing from the histories of England and of Scotland. They will readily occur to Macaulay's school-boy; and so far as France is concerned, the close of the last century and the opening years of this are a case so trenchant that—many as there are—no other example is needful. Russia's modern history is entirely linked with the passing of the centuries—the "Coming of Peter the Great," "Catherine's Constitution," the Franco-Russian War, the first Turkish War, and now the great Eirenicon of Peace. Austria's history since she was a nation is almost as striking an example of the same thing as is India's. Germany and modern Italy alone of Continental Powers are the exceptions which prove the rule.

If one turns from the story of peoples to the progress of man, one finds once again how fateful have been the linking years of the centuries. The first authentic steam engine was made

in 1698, and Papin's engine was exhibited in 1699, whilst the first steamboat (built by the same inventor in the same year) was destroyed by the too godly watermen of the Weser as a thing of evil repute! At the commencement of the eighteenth century Newcomen invented the engine which remained unchanged as the standard type of stationary engine until the beginning of the present century, when the present form was devised as the outcome of improvements by Trevithick, Woolf, and a score of other fertile brains. The first successful and practicable paddle-wheel steamboat was launched on the Clyde in 1790, and by the year 1818 the first steamer had crossed the Atlantic. Now, a century later, comes the next great advance—the principle of rotary instead of intermittent application of power in the Turbine—probably the greatest advance of all. Few people remember that the first railway was sanctioned by Parliament so long ago as the first year of the present century, or that, in 1802, that mighty man of brains, Trevithick, took out the first patent for a locomotive steam engine, an invention of which the memories of Watt and Stephenson struggle for the glory. Who, again, knows that “that product of the nineteenth cen-

tury,” electricity, was defined and examined by Gilbert in 1600? (As long ago as 1748, by the way, a turkey was both killed and roasted by the same subtle force, yet electric cookers are but a “modern fad” and a plaything still.) It was in 1790, '91 and '93 that the really great strides in the science of electricity were made by the electro-chemical discoveries of Cavendish, Fourcroy, Galvani, and Volta, and it is only in the 'nineties of the present century that electricity has come into general use.

To such events as the abolition of slavery, the great revolutionary wave of the dying eighteenth century, the first crusade at the close of the eleventh century—perhaps the greatest turning-point in the whole history of civilized Europe—one's mind turns irresistibly when thinking of the great facts of human progress, and a dozen more, all closely connected with the first few or the last few years of different centuries, could be named. Explain these coincidences one cannot. One can only recognize the fact that Fate has accepted man's arbitrary measures of time, and has arranged her most dramatic scenes accordingly. And during the present decade she has so far striven nobly to do what is expected of her.

The Speaker.

## SHE.

(At His Funeral.)

They bear him to his resting-place—  
In slow procession sweeping by;  
I follow at a stranger's space;  
His kindred they, his sweetheart I.  
Unchanged my gown of garish dye,  
Though sable-sad is their attire;  
But they stand round with griefless eye,  
Whilst my regret consumes like fire!

Thomas Hardy.

From “Wessex Poems, and Other Verses.”

## BOOKS AND AUTHORS.

The publication of Sir Walter Besant's survey of London, which had been expected in the coming spring, is to be deferred until autumn. It will probably fill nine volumes.

Mr. W. Clark Russell says that the hero in his latest story, "The Romance of a Midshipman," was Frank Dickens, one of Charles Dickens's sons, and a schoolmate of Mr. Russell's.

The end is not yet in sight of posthumous publications of the writings of Victor Hugo. His executor is about to publish a volume of his poems, and one of "Choses Vues," and more letters are also promised.

Mr. Black was addicted to sad endings for his stories. Mr. Marston, the English publisher who issued his books, says, in a recently printed note, that, after reading "Wild Eelin" in proof, he wrote to Mr. Black asking him to alter the ending, for the peace of mind of the readers. Mr. Black replied:—

"As regards the 'tragic ending,' that seemed to me, from all points of view, inevitable. If I had forced the usual conventional happy climax, then, perhaps, for twenty-four hours you might have remembered something about the young lass that was living at Glengarva House; whereas, with the window-blinds down, you may, from time to time, have a backward thought towards *Eelin* of the eyes like the sea wave."

The Academy borrows from the Bible Society Reporter this story illustrating the difficulty experienced in translating the Bible into heathen languages:—

In a distant island, copies of the New Testament had, for the first time, been

placed in the hands of the natives, who were diligently studying them. One day the missionary, in his private reading, discovered that the passage, "It is required of ministers that they be found faithful," had been rendered in the vernacular, "It is required of ministers that they be faithfully hanged." An "e" for an "a" in the rendering of the local word for "found" had made all the difference. The error was, happily, corrected before any effort had been made to reduce this precept to practice.

Apropos of the recent disclosure of the identity of "C. E. Raimond," The Academy gives an entertaining account of the efforts made to maintain the secret of the personality of Miss Fiona Macleod. The Academy says:—

We are told that Miss Macleod's letters have to be re-addressed three or four times before they come into her hands. She is known to a small circle, who keep the secret well; her forcible handwriting is known to many. No editor has managed to get her photograph, though one had it in his hands. We doubt if Miss Macleod's publishers have met her. At first Mr. William Sharp did a good deal of her business work, but she superintends it herself now. The mystery as to her identity is not one that will arouse the suspicion of the literary, but certain Gaels, whose dislike for Miss Macleod's work amounts to a passion, have sought assiduously to force her to reveal her personality. Every sort of criticism except that which is literary has been applied to her work. One ardent Gael turned up the files of a Glasgow paper to see if any of the tragedies Miss Macleod depicts actually occurred, another took a census of Iona—no difficult task—to discover the originals of her characters. It is startling to learn that their researches were unavailing. Still another Gael is said to have done detective duty opposite a house in Edinburgh where Miss Macleod sometimes stays, and Miss Macleod is as unknown as ever.

